BASUTOLAND:

ITS LEGENDS AND CUSTOMS

BY

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Dedication.

To T. L——.

DEAR ——

Some time ago, during a conversation about Basutoland, you suggested that I should write an account of the country and its inhabitants, and were kind enough to give me many valuable hints as to how I should collect and arrange my information.

As you know, we came out to South Africa in January, 1891, and went up to Basutoland in the following April.

We both liked the country from the first, and I soon became interested in the people. To enable myself to understand them better, I began to study the language, which I can now speak fairly well.

The fact of my husband being a Government official gave me many opportunities of acquiring information, and, as we have been moved about

from one station to another, having had six "homes" in the ten years of our sojourn there, I have naturally seen a considerable portion of the country, and come in contact with many different specimens of the Basuto race. I have made a practice of visiting the different villages, and of seeing as much as possible of the inner life of the people, with the result that I have at length put my impressions on paper, in the hope that they may be found of some value to those who take an interest in native habits and customs.

For the kind help and encouragement I have received from you, I am deeply grateful, and hope you will allow me to dedicate to you this small volume, which, without your aid, would never have been written.

To those who have most kindly helped me with information, I tender my grateful thanks.

MINNIE MARTIN.

CHAPTER I.

OUTLINE OF BASUTO HISTORY — MOSHESHUE — LETSIE—LEROTHOLI—SCENERY—CLIMATE.

WERE I to attempt to give a complete history of the Basuto I should fail utterly, for my own personal knowledge of South Africa only extends over the last ten years. Although several books have been written on the subject by missionaries, the Basuto as a nation do not seem capable of giving one much reliable information beyond the time of Tokoana Makhautha, the grandfather of Mosheshue.

Here and there through the country old men are to be found who possess marvellous stores of knowledge, but how much it can be relied upon, would be a question impossible to answer satistorily.

My readers will, I hope, therefore content themselves with a brief sketch of Basuto history from about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Tokoana Makhautha was chief at that time of a considerable tract of country in and around Witsies' Hoek. He seems to have been a stern, ambitious man, with little of the "milk of human kindness" in his character.

He was succeeded by his son Mokhatchane,

who, however, possessed little power, and who, when his children were come to manhood, installed his son Mopeli at Witsies' Hoek, while he himself followed the fortunes of his favourite son, who as a youth bore the name of "Lepoko" (a quarrel), because he was born during a time of strife, but who afterwards assumed the name of Mosheshue.

From the time of his abdication old Mokhatchane seems to have led a more or less retired life at Thaba Bosigo, though no doubt he exerted a certain amount of influence over Mosheshue, and was treated with considerable respect. Filial obedience is a very strong trait in all Basutos.

Mosheshue began his "reign" by subduing one or two small tribes, and with these and his original followers betook himself to an almost impregnable mountain in the centre of the Lesuto, called Thaba Bosigo (the Mountain of Night), where he built his village, fortifying it so as to make it a perfectly secure stronghold. Here he established his chieftainship, and, after various wars, reverses and successes, conquered or dispersed all rivals, and soon succeeded in becoming Paramount Chief of the greater part of Basutoland, or, as it ought more correctly to be called, the Lesuto.

Mosheshue was possessed of great ambition, singular courage, and firmness; but acts of

brutality or injustice have never been coupled with his name. Judging from all accounts, he seems to have been a bright exception to the chiefs of that time. His ambition was to rule the Lesuto as its undisputed Sovereign, and he saw that to do so he must win not only men's obedience, but their confidence and respect. He was a man of commanding appearance and very great intelligence. He taught his people not only to respect but also to love him.

During the greater part of his reign there were constant fights with various tribes, such as the Batlokua, the Amalubi, the Baputi, etc., but one by one they gathered under his sway, and were ruled wisely and with wonderful justice and skill. He is still looked upon as the "Great Father" ('Ntate Mogholo) of his people, and the most sacred form of oath is that which swears "truly by Mosheshue."

It was while he was yet in the prime of life that the first missionaries, MM. Eugene Casalis, Arbousset and Gosselin, entered the Lesuto, in 1833. M. Casalis, in his book, "My Life in Basutoland," describes his introduction to Mosheshue (who he considers must have been then about forty-five), his wizened old father, Mokhatchane, and his favourite wife, a woman with a calm, happy face, and the manners of a lady, and between whom and her lord existed a very strong bond of love.

But chiefly M. Casalis was struck with Mosheshue, whom he describes as a man with a "majestic and benevolent look, a profile much more aquiline than that of most of his subjects, a well-developed forehead, and eyes full of intelligence and softness."

Mosheshue died in 1880, and was succeeded by his eldest son Letsie, a man of a cruel, crafty nature, who held his people forcibly to their allegiance, threatening, "smelling out," and in many cases actually torturing those who showed signs of rebellion. Strange to say, shortly before his death, he expressed a wish to become a Christian, but died before being baptized, in the spring of 1892, and was buried with great pomp and ceremony on the top of Thaba Bosigo, the burial-place of the great chiefs. His son, Lerotholi, then became the Paramount Chief.

Lerotholi must be now about fifty years of age. He is a big, stout man, not nearly so pleasing or attractive in appearance as some of the other chiefs, but by no means devoid of intelligence, and at times can be extremely polite and agreeable. As a boy, he was not allowed to share the educational advantages of his brothers, and was for a time kept in the mountains, in charge of his father's cattle; consequently he can neither read nor write, but he has considerable natural ability, and is quick to penetrate the right and wrong of

the cases brought up to him for judgment. Unfortunately, he inherits some of his father's cruel and crafty qualities, and is much feared by his people, but he has a wholesome respect for his Sovereign, and that Sovereign's representative, the Resident Commissioner. Yet, with such a nature as his, I should think the greatest tact and patience are necessary. He has, however, proved himself undoubtedly loyal, as have almost all the other chiefs, and, in fact, the whole nation; but how much is due to their own "good hearts," and how much to the tactful way in which they were handled, added to their hatred of the Dutch, I leave others to unravel.

Lerotholi is, of course, a polygamist, but then almost, if not all, the chiefs are the proud possessors of more than one wife, though none would dare to support an establishment as large as his, even if they could afford to do so.

He lives at Matsyeng, the headquarters of the Paramount Chief, situated a short distance from Maseru, which latter place is the headquarters of the Government. Near here is held the annual "Pitso" or Parliament, to which all the chiefs, the headmen and thousands of less exalted personages flock. This Pitso is "called" by the Resident Commissioner, who presides over the whole proceeding, surrounded by his staff, and all the Assistant Commissioners from the separate dis-

tricts. The laws which have been drawn up or altered during the past year are then read out to the people, and receive the approval of the chiefs. There is naturally a good deal of discussion, but the people quite acknowledge British rule, and know that when a law is made they must obey it, though, if any real objection is brought forward, it always receives due attention.

At the present time the principal chiefs under Lerotholi are Jonathan, Joel, Māma, Letsie (Lerotholi's son and heir-apparent), 'Nquebe and Griffeth. The latter is a younger and favourite son of the Paramount Chief. Jonathan and Joel are sons of Molapo, and cousins of Lerotholi. They are both men of considerable ability, Jonathan in particular being most polished and well educated.

The Lesuto, or as it is more commonly called, Basutoland, is also called the Switzerland of South Africa, a name well suited to such a mountainous country. To the big busy world it is a comparatively unknown land, but to those who have seen its wild, rugged beauty, it is a land of great attraction. It has an area of about 10,000 square miles, with a population of nearly 300,000, of whom only about 500 are European. The country itself is extremely mountainous, almost entirely destitute of trees, save at the various magistracies and mission and trading stations, and at some of the larger and better-class villages.

Government gives a considerable sum yearly to be spent in trees, which are distributed through the country, with a view to encouraging the natives to raise timber. This is by no means difficult, as the Basutos are only too ready to plant anything and everything likely to be useful, either for food or in any other capacity.

The scenery of Basutoland is rugged and grand, with a beauty quite its own, and unlike any other part of South Africa I have seen. As you enter from the Orange River Colony, you see enormous rocks and "kopjes" jutting up here and there all around you, while every now and then up rises a majestic mountain, as a rule with table-land on the summit; below lie fertile valleys and more or less (generally less) level plains, and in the far distance, looking east, rises the beautiful range of the Malutis, a spur of the Drackensberg Mountains, which separate Basutoland from Natal.

This is one of the most picturesque ranges imaginable. One day it stands out clear and sharp, every ravine visible to the naked eye, the next it is dim, distant, and to all appearances devoid of ravines or precipices; then again it is capable of most varied tints, from pearly grey, dim and shadowy, to deep, rich, glowing purple, in the sun's setting rays. In the winter the Malutis are nearly always covered with snow, which greatly adds to the beauty of the scenery, but

renders it most unsafe to travel. Often dense fogs come down without any warning, making it impossible to see even a yard in front of one. Woe betide the hardy traveller who attempts to continue his journey at such a time! It is almost certain death.

The population on these mountains is very small, and consists chiefly of the herds at the cattle posts, with an isolated village here and there. These herds are generally youths and boys, whose duty it is to care for the cattle and sheep, sent up from the different villages in the "plains" for the sake of the rich pasture to be found in the valleys and on the table-lands of these mountains. Hither every autumn are brought all the animals that can be spared from the lower and more barren lands, to winter and escape the semi-starvation, and often death, which await their less fortunate fellows, whose fate it is to remain at the homesteads below. It is quite a picturesque scene to see one of these cavalcades start. The herd boys pack up enough meal, salt, mealies and Kaffir corn to last for their own use through the winter, their only other food being the flesh of any beast or bird they can manage to kill with their sticks aided by their dogs, or the carcase of any of the flock which dies or comes to an untimely end. When the provisions are ready, they are slung on the backs of several pack oxen, the

younger boys taking charge of them, a boy to each ox, which they hold by a leather or grass rope converted into reins by being passed through the poor animal's nose and both ends tied together, making a loop long enough to pass over his horns on to his neck. All the guiding is done by hitting the horns. The older herds then take up their musical instruments, which they begin to play, leading the way, followed by all the flock, and accompanied by several dogs. The pack oxen and boys bring up the rear. In this way they journey to the particular spot chosen by their particular chief, and here they remain till summer comes, when they return to their homes in the same manner as they set out. They never hurry; the animals graze as they go, finding abundant pasture by the way.

As I said before, the country is almost destitute of trees now, though it evidently was well wooded at one time. The soil is rich and fertile, the crops sown by the Basuto in the most happy-go-lucky style yielding splendid returns as a rule, and, where European care and skill have been expended, richly repaying the owner.

The mountains in the western part of the country, which stand up in solitary state, like great giants guarding their land, are for the most part flat topped, with splendid pasture on the table-land. They are wonderfully alike in size and

shape, fairly easy of ascent near the bottom, steep and rocky, often precipitous near the top. A few of these mountains are conical in shape, and one or two are most grotesque.

Scattered all over the face of the country are numbers of enormous rocks of every conceivable shape, sometimes lying in solitary state, at other places grouped in twos and threes side by side, and yet again lying one on the top of the other, often the larger one on top. This at a distance presents an appearance somewhat like a badly-shaped mushroom.

At Tsikoani, where Chief Jonathan Molapo lives, there is an enormous natural table, constructed out of three great rocks. At the back of the village rises a steep mountain, almost precipitous on three sides. In this are several caves, one of which extends for a considerable distance, following as it were the outline of the mountain, then plunging recklessly through it, emerging at length upon the farther side. It is in most places of great height, but there are two extremely narrow parts, like tiny passages, into large reception halls. In one of these caves there are, on the roof, gigantic fossilized footprints, which at first were supposed to be those of some enormous bird. This greatly exercised people's minds, for how, they argued, could a bird stand with head and body suspended downwards. However, it has now

been proved that they are the footprints of a prehistoric lizard, and that formerly the rock must have been in an almost upright position. A portion of this rock was hewn out and sent to the last Kimberley Exhibition, whence it found its way to the Bloemfontein Museum, where, I believe, it now lies.

Beyond Tsikoani there lay, until quite recently, the trunk of a fossil tree, about ten feet in length and over two feet in diameter. When it was discovered the European population of Leribe (in which district it was found) were naturally much interested, and went in small parties on several occasions to visit the spot, carrying away small pieces of the tree as souvenirs. The Basuto could not understand these visits—their suspicions were aroused—"Could this stone contain some form of witchcraft, or was there unknown wealth hidden within it?" Not being able to solve the mystery, they destroyed the tree.

From the curious shape of many of the large rocks, and from the formation of the "kopjes," one is led to believe that in former ages the country must have been subject to great volcanic disturbances. To many people, I should think the study of the various fossils and physical features of the country would prove deeply interesting; even to watch the changes caused in a few years by the floods, which turn tiny streams into deep

dongas, and wash away one landmark here and another there, is of no small interest.

The river-beds are rocky at and near their sources, gradually becoming sandy as they increase in size, with here and there rocky beds of a basaltic appearance, continuing for perhaps a few hundred yards at most. On the banks and in the coarser sandy beds are to be found beautifully transparent crystals, sometimes of great size, also agates, and many and varied beautifully coloured and polished stones.

In dry weather all the larger rivers in Basutoland are sluggish, calm tracts of water, the smaller streams mere silvery trickles, bubbling happily in and out amongst the stones on their course, but they all rise rapidly, and in an almost incredibly short time become roaring torrents, most dangerous, nay even impossible to ford. Both to see and hear a river "coming down" is a thing never to be forgotten. The roar of the first big volume of water as it comes is not a pleasant sound to the traveller crossing "the drift," the sight still less pleasant if he is not already across. There are no bridges in Basutoland, and many of the drifts are steep and unpleasant, even in fine weather, when there is only a normal quantity of water in the river.

In the time of the old chief Molapo, women invariably went to the top of Leribe Mountain, a

large table-land, to dig for clay with which to plaster their huts. Upon one occasion they found some pretty stones, which they gave as playthings to their children. Some Europeans happening to see these stones, at once recognised that they were diamonds of considerable value, and endeavoured to buy them (one was reported to be "as large as a big man's thumb"), but Molapo, hearing of it, ordered the stones to be returned to the place where they were found and re-buried in the clay; nor would he, in future, allow any one to revisit that spot. In order to keep a constant watch upon the place, he had a village built close by, whose inhabitants were to inform him of any one attempting to disobey his commands. The village is still there, and the spot is guarded as jealously as ever. Very few people know of this, and I do not suppose that more than two Europeans could find the place where those diamonds lie buried The Basuto have such a dread of their country becoming overrun with white men that they most jealously guard its wealth. The land is theirs, they say. If the white man thinks it has gold and diamonds he will take it from them.

This is not the only spot in the country upon which a constant watch is kept. There is gold quartz to be found in some of the river beds, and they are guarded. There are reefs here and there through the western part of Basutoland which cer-

tainly indicate gold, and they, too, are guarded. A friend of mine one day, in walking up a hill, picked up a piece of quartz and took it home to show her husband. The next day she was politely asked by the chief of the district why she had been picking up his stones, and would she be so kind as not to take any more from that spot. It was, of course, very politely put, but it showed how much the chief knew, and that he dreaded that knowledge being carried out of the country.

In addition to the above, Basutoland also boasts of some very good coal, both in the north and in the Mohale's Hoek district in the south; but, though these mines have been worked to a certain extent for local consumption, the chiefs have now put a stop to further workings. The native brass and iron, too, is fairly good, and there is excellent clay for pottery purposes.

Beyond Chief Khabo's village, in the Leribe district, there is a cave on the sides of which a salty deposit is formed, which, in former days, the buck came to lick, and which the goats and sheep greatly appreciate now. Inside the cave are some Bushman paintings of the usual type, while outside, near the entrance, are some traps made by the Bushmen to catch buck. These traps are circular depressions in the ground, about ten feet in diameter. One wonders how such tiny people could have made them. Originally they were of

considerable depth, and were covered over with bushes. The victims caught in these traps were chiefly eland, hartebeeste, and springbok. There are Bushman caves in various parts of Basutoland, especially in the Quthing district, but in most of them the paintings have become rather indistinct, and in some cases have been almost entirely obliterated by mischievous little herd boys. The scenes, as a rule, represent extremely minute Bushmen hunting and capturing gigantic elands. Occasionally a fight is depicted, in which huge Kaffir warriors are fleeing in confusion before their triumphant pixie-like foes.

There are now only about half-a-dozen survivors of the Bushman race in Basutoland, and they no longer live by themselves, but with the Basuto, who treat them kindly and quite as members of their own families, though the term "Bushman," or, as it is in Sesuto, "Baroa" (literally the yellow people), is still one of contempt.

They are funny little stunted creatures, very yellow in colour, with high cheek-bones, small bright eyes, and a meagre quantity of hair on their heads, each woolly curl being quite separate and apart from the next, with the scalp plainly visible all round.

In addition to its other many attractions, Basutoland possesses some really beautiful waterfalls, the three largest being the far-famed Malutsunyane,

the Telle, and the Ketane Falls. The Telle Falls are almost unknown, but quite as high as, if not higher than, the Malutsunyane. They lie in the Quthing district, close to the Herschel border. The other two falls are in the Maluti Mountains, about the centre of Basutoland. To reach them is not easy, consequently the number of adventurers keen enough to face the discomforts and difficulties is small. Of course the rainy season is the best for seeing the falls to the fullest advantage, as the volume of water is large and the effect much finer (on a bright day) than during the dry season; but there is naturally more discomfort in travelling, and one's journey, both going and coming, may be considerably prolonged by the state of the rivers, spruits and dongas, not to mention the slippery state of the path down the mountain sides. Of course, the only way (apart from "Shanks's pony") is to ride, taking a packhorse or two (according to the number of your party), well laden with provisions, tents, and the necessary amount of clothing. The Malutsunyana Falls are 630 ft.; the Telle, I fancy, have only once been "sized up," and, if I remember rightly, were estimated to be about 650 ft. in height. The Ketane is the smallest, but the most beautiful of the three in its surroundings. The Basuto believe that in the big pool at the foot of each falls lives a sacred reptile, somewhat resembling a snake, with

a head like a sheep. It is the spirit of the waters, and is always attended by a rainbow.

The largest river in Basutoland is the Sinkou, or Orange River, which rises in the Malutis and passes through the southern districts, forming the border between Herschel and the Orange River Colony. There are few rivers more beautiful than the Sinkou, running as it does down deep ravines, twisting in and out, now round this kopje, now round that, broadening here to considerable proportions, flowing so calmly, so silently as almost to resemble still water, and anon rushing and roaring through some deep, narrow defile, lashing itself in masses of white foam against the black rocks which jut up here and there, as if angry with them for interrupting its erstwhile quiet flow. There are parts where the water is of considerable depth, and one or two places (formerly the abodes of "sea cows") which are many fathoms deep. Fish are plentiful, and there are some delightful reaches on which to sail one's boat. There are many rivers in various parts of the country, some fair-sized, some merely what in Scotland we would term "a burn," but none so beautiful as the Sinkou

Basutoland abounds in deep kloofs, or ravines, the steep sides of which are often covered with short stunted bushes and huge boulders, and at the bottom, in fine weather, warbles a tiny silver stream, which, after a thunderstorm, or in the

rainy season, is converted into a brown, muddy torrent, carrying everything pell-mell before it.

At Butha-Buthe, in the North, there is a piece of swampy ground which, to the ordinary observer, merely looks like a good place for ducks and frogs, yet, to the native inhabitants of the district, it is more or less sacred ground, as one spot there is inhabited by a spirit. Some years ago, without any apparent reason, smoke was seen issuing from this "Khapong," as it is called. No one had set it alight; no sign of human interference could be found, nor did the ground consume away, yet, night and day, through rain and sunshine, for three whole months, this streak of smoke was seen to arise from the selfsame spot, with never even the smallest tongue of flame to be seen; consequently it came to be regarded as a spot sacred to the Spirit of Maternity, and hither, from time to time, come old and young with offerings of beadwork, money, food, dolls, etc., hoping thus to propitiate the spirit within, and to receive a favourable answer to their prayers.

Once, while we were stationed at Butha-Buthe, there was great excitement amongst the people, for the streak of smoke was again seen slowly ascending skywards. It was a pouring wet day, when one would have found it impossible to light a fire out of doors, yet the rain had apparently no effect on this mysterious fire.

My servants called me to look, and there, sure enough, it was—a thin grey streak of smoke steadily mounting towards the clouds, but on this occasion it did not continue for more than a few hours, during which time it was far too wet for me to venture down to investigate the spot. Afterwards I thoroughly searched the place, but, beyond seeing a small strip of black, peat-like soil on the edge of a small sluit, and finding money, bangles, beads, and clay dolls laid underneath a projecting piece of the bank, I saw nothing. There was absolutely *no* trace of a fire. Some of the dolls, very primitive in shape, had evidently been lying there for years. There are several similar spots in various other parts of the country.

The climate of Basutoland is said to be the healthiest in South Africa. It certainly is good. The air is delightfully rare and pure, and in most parts very bracing, and the whole country lies very high, no part of it being, I believe, lower than 4,000 ft., while many of the stations are built at a height of from 5,000 ft. to 6,000 ft., the highest peak in the mountains reaching to a little over 10,000 ft. There are, however, great extremes of heat and cold, which must be somewhat trying to delicate constitutions, and the high altitude is more or less to blame, I fancy, for the numbers of nervous complaints amongst the European population.

In the summer, which lasts from November to March, there are frequent gales, the winds in early summer being nearly always hot and dry, scorching the skin, and making the housewife's life a burden to her, by reason of the dust which *will* penetrate into every corner of her rooms. The heat is often very great, the thermometer rarely falling below 88° F. in the shade in the day, and not infrequently rising to 103° F.; while in winter it is almost equally cold, the mountains being often white with snow, which falls also on the lowlands, though it rarely lies there for more than a few hours. The winds at these times generally elect to blow off the mountains, and are so piercingly cold that it is extremely difficult to keep warm, but it is a most healthy and bracing cold. In spring and early summer the hailstorms do great damage to the early crops, and the thunderstorms all through the hot weather are very severe, the lightning fatalities being by no means infrequent.

CHAPTER II.

APPEARANCE OF BASUTO—ALBINOS—NATIVE VILLAGES—HUTS—MANNER OF LIVING—DRESS—ORNAMENTS.

THE Basuto are a fine, well-proportioned race, though as a rule the men are not so tall nor so well-built as the Zulus.

They are of a soft brown colour, with less protruding lips, and more regular features than the Colonial Kaffir, and with far pleasanter expressions; graceful and upright, with considerable intelligence, and remarkably amiable. As a nation they are wonderfully honest and trustworthy. They are far more "tillers of the soil" than men of battle, preferring to live at peace with their neighbours to treading the war path.

The women are good-natured and docile, slaves to their lord and master, acknowledging his complete power and superiority over them with perfect contentment. They naturally possess a certain amount of vanity, and, to gratify it, will endure no small amount of pain in tattooing their faces, but in this the men are not behindhand. As a rule, both sexes are devoted to their children, who lead healthy, happy young lives, free from care, not cumbered with over-much clothing, and with few duties or restraints.

A strange feature of this race is the number of Albinos to be found in it, and, since the white man became a familiar object to the Basuto, these poor hideous creatures are, by many of their more fortunate brethren, looked upon as quite lovely specimens of humanity. I know one policeman, who told me with great pride that he had married a white wife, who was very pretty. Would I not go to see her? I went, not quite understanding, for I had only been a short time in the country, and it was with great difficulty that I was able to disguise my feeling of repulsion. She was indeed hideous, poor creature, yet she quite gave herself the airs of a beauty, and smiled contentedly upon me, little dreaming of the feelings she was awakening. Since then I have seen a good many more, but never have I been able to conquer my strong dislike to these most unnatural-looking beings. There is one grave fault about a Mosuto, which is that he has no idea of truthfulness. To him it is no crime to tell a lie—in fact, he finds it an absolutely necessary virtue. It is at times quite ludicrous to hear the solemn and, to all seeming, most truthful account given you about some small episode by an open-faced, honest-looking Mosuto, when all the time you are in a position to know that there is hardly a word of truth in what he is saying. I have tried to make them understand how wrong it is to tell

such falsehoods, but, beyond a half shame-faced and wholly mischievous smile, my words never seemed to have much effect.

The Basuto usually build their villages on the side of a mountain or kopje, selecting situations which offer many natural means of defence. Their huts are generally circular, sod-wall buildings, with thatch roofs, and outside each hut, as a rule, is a sort of palisade of reeds called a "skerm," in which all the cooking and frequently the eating also takes place. When a man wanted to build a hut, in the days before they adopted more civilized modes, and even now, in the more remote parts of the country, he took a stick, to which he fastened a strip of ox-hide, stuck the other end of the strip firmly in the ground with another peg, and, with the stick in his hand, drew a complete circle; on this line he raised the walls of his dwelling; these are made of square sods, roughly dug off the surface of the ground and laid one on the top of the other until the required height is reached. The walls are then smeared over, inside and out, with wet clay, which is the women's work. The woodwork of the roof is then laid on. It consists of branches of trees interlaced and fastened securely at the top with grass rope. On this the reeds are thickly laid and stitched down to the woodwork by more grass rope. The inner walls of the hut are often ornamented by rough scroll-

work in different coloured clays. A small aperture serves as window, and over the entrance is hung a reed mat, made by lashing together with the sinews of cattle a number of dried reeds. The floors are of mud, beaten down till perfectly hard and fairly even. They are smeared over afresh every week or ten days, in order to preserve them, and also as a matter of cleanliness, much as an English housewife scrubs her floors. In the more wealthy dwellings the floors are from time to time smeared over with bullock's blood. This gives them a dark, slightly polished appearance, and makes them very much harder on the surface than those of the poorer individuals, who have to content themselves with a mixture of clay and manure from the cattle kraals. The original furniture of a native hut consisted of a mat, similar to the one hung over the entrance; a few skins, which answered the purpose of clothing by day and bedding by night; a few earthenware pots and wooden spurtles, or spoons, one or two horn spoons, often very prettily carved; and neat, strong baskets of various shapes and sizes, but chiefly round, and somewhat like an enlarged basin. The cooking was all done in the earthenware pots until European traders introduced iron pots and kettles.

The chief or headman lives in the centre circle of the village. All the huts in the older villages

are built in circles, one within another. This was done as a means of guarding more securely the chief and his family. As a rule, the chief has one or two buildings for his own exclusive use, while his wives' huts are built either in a row or round his own larger, more highly-finished dwellings. Each wife has a separate hut, which is her own little kingdom.

Frequently the cattle kraal (a large enclosure) is found near the centre of the village, and near it is the large hut called the "Khotla" or Court, where the chief daily sits to administer justice (according to his interpretation of the word). There is always a large open space in front of the Khotla, where the people gather to hear the cases and to discuss the various complaints or offences. The Basuto are wonderfully given to long-winded discussions and explanations, and one would think a chief needed the patience of many Jobs to listen, as he often has to do, for hours at a time, to tedious and voluminous evidence from one man after another about some paltry case which, in an European Court, would be disposed of in a few moments.

The more civilized Basuto are rapidly learning to build square, stone huts, more like European dwellings, as they have adopted European dress and European household utensils; but the old native dwellings and dress are, to my mind, in-

finitely more picturesque, and their native ornaments, made of native metal, brass, iron, etc., infinitely more interesting than the awful "Brummagem" atrocities sold to them by the traders in the country.

I was much struck, when first I entered Basutoland, with the great superiority of the Basuto villages to those of the colonial Kaffirs which I had seen in the Eastern Province, both as regards cleanliness, neatness and durability, and I was equally pleased with the Basuto themselves, finding them both polite and obliging.

In the days before soap found its way into the country the people used to wash themselves with pieces of white clay, rubbing it all over themselves much as one rubs soap, or if they did not wish to use the clay, they dug out a large bulb which they call "Khapompo." It is the root of a broad-leafed plant, somewhat like a pineapple plant in shape, and is very astringent. When first used it causes a rash to appear on the surface of the skin, but after a few applications makes the skin soft and smooth.

In the old days, and still amongst the wilder and less civilized Basuto, the men's dress consisted of a kaross (letata), or blanket of skins, which they wore with the fur inside and fastened on to the shoulder by a couple of soft straps made of skin, and sewn firmly to the kaross with ox

sinews, the only cotton they know of. Their only other article of clothing was a lamb skin strapped round their loins. The women wore aprons of sheep skins, one skin being considered quite large enough, while behind they tied an ox hide, cut into the shape of a circular cloak. Above the waist they wore nothing, unless in very cold weather, when they also wrapped themselves up in karosses. The little boys were, and are, clad in nature's garb, pure and simple, until they attain the age of twelve, when they adopt men's costumes.

The little girls from babyhood wear what they call "tetana," which is a deep fringe made of a thin-leaved weed, called by them "tseketlane." This they tie round their waists. To make it they take a strip of skin, cured and softened, until it resembles chamois leather, cut this about an inch broad, and wide enough to go easily round the child's hips, then take a large quantity of the weed, tear off the two outer parts, leaving only the back bone, as it were, which is about as thick as moderately fine string. The women then roll this up and down on their well-greased and red-clayed thighs, until it turns from a silvery white to a reddish brown. Bunches of these they sew to the strap all the way round. Their manner of sewing is naturally primitive. They make small sharp probes of native metal; with these they

pierce holes in the strap, and, dividing the fringe in half, they tighten it "through the middle" on to the strap by means of dried sinews, and let the top part of the fringe fall over the lower part, thus making it of double thickness.

The kaross is made by sewing a number of skins together with sinew, the skins as a rule being of rock rabbit, or small deer, and occasionally of silver jackal. The skins are first dried, then rubbed over with powdered sandstone till thoroughly clean and more pliable, then rubbed by hand, always keeping the hands well greased, the greatest care being taken not to spoil the fur or rub holes. This rubbing is continued until the whole skin is thoroughly pliable and as soft as silk, by which time it is ready to be sewn.

The original ornaments consisted of brass rings of various sizes, beaten out to considerable width, and worn by the women round their necks; bangles, roughly twisted, of brass, on the arms from the wrist almost up to the elbow, and larger ones round the ankle and just below the knee; and bangles made of soft iron about an inch and a half broad and roughly carved by means of pieces of sharpened iron; also necklaces and bangles of the heads of a grass rather resembling Kaffir corn in miniature. These they used to plait very artistically, drying some in the huts in order to preserve the green tint, and others out-

side in the sun so as bleach them. Ornaments for dances consisted of, in addition to those already mentioned, skins specially "scratched" by their needles into artistic scrolls, circles, and crosses; anklets made of skin, into small bags partially filled with small smooth pebbles, and wetted and allowed to harden. These make a peculiar rustling rattle as the dancer moves. The men also wear ox tails suspended from both elbows, both shoulders, and both knees, and a head-dress made either of quantities of feathers, and not unlike a busby, or one of the hair off many ox tails. They also carry a shield made of hard stiff hide, and a long stick, straight and beautifully polished, with a round knob at the top.

Men and women alike smear their bodies, faces, and hands with a mixture of red clay and fat, but this is a general practice, and not only for fête days, even the tiny babies being polished in this way.

For a girl the correct dancing costume consisted of the fringe round the hips, the anklets of skin and pebbles, and a head-dress made of the crest of the golden-crested crane and other crested birds. The married women simply don their best skins and hold a more or less fantastic stick in their hands.

Since European traders have settled in the country the Basuto have taught themselves to

make wire and bead necklaces and bangles of really remarkable attractiveness, their bead work being most elaborate. To make a bead necklace they will buy a quantity of different coloured beads, which they thread on fine sinews, not in single rows, but in broad patterns, sometimes two and three inches wide. Sometimes the colours are worked alternately, sometimes in squares, and sometimes diagonally. These are fastened by the sinew in the form of a loop on one side, and a bunch of beads or a button on the other. The bangles are made of grass plaited into a circular strand, on to which they string the beads until the grass foundation is completely hidden. They also embroider their skins with many coloured beads, and make a regular waistband of beads. They make small brass buttons out of the soft native brass with which they edge their "dresses."

The wire bangles are made of copper wire, brass wire, and aluminium wire of various thickness (generally very fine). These wires are twisted together, or plaited in the same way in which they plait their grass. Some of them are remarkably pretty.

The brass neck ornaments are made out of the native metal, which is dug out and melted, and then poured into a hollow previously made in a large flat stone, and this forms it into a ring large enough to encircle a woman's neck. Before

the metal is cold it is polished with round smooth stones, while still soft it is cut through at one end, and gently forced open until the woman is able to insert her neck. It is then firmly pressed together and held there until cold and hard. These ornaments are called "lepetu," and are extremely difficult to remove. I once asked a woman if her "lepetu" ever hurt her, she seemed much amused and surprised at my question, and laughingly replied, "Certainly not." Their manner of removing them is somewhat barbarous. The woman kneels down, two reims or straps are put through each side, and a steady pull begins, a man holding each reim. As soon as the opening is large enough, the woman squeezes her neck out, and rises free from her bonds.

CHAPTER III.

MANNER OF CULTIVATING THE SOIL—GRAIN—HARVEST-FOOD — MANNER OF EATING — RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY—IMPORTS—STATUS OF WOMEN—CHILDREN—RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS —MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS—HEATHEN SCHOOLS —AMUSEMENTS.

THE way in which the ground was cultivated prior to the introduction of spades and hoes, was not calculated to produce heavy crops, yet so rich is the soil that the grain sown came up splendidly, and provided neither locusts nor drought visited the land, heavy crops were yielded. The implements used were small iron hoes, which the Basuto made out of the iron found in the country. After melting the iron, they hit it into flat pieces about twice the size of a man's hand, and very much that shape. The part corresponding to the human arm was forced, when hot, into the end of a long thick stick; the other end was sharpened on the hard flint stones brought for that purpose from the Malutis.

With these hoes the Basuto "chopped up" the ground, the seed having been scattered first of all on the undisturbed surface.

When weeding-time came, the Basuto took short

thick sticks, which they sharpened with their "knives." The weeding is always done by the women. In drought the women used to carry water in their earthenware pots to water the "lands," even the small children helping in this work.

A "knife" was merely a flat strip of native iron about as broad as two fingers and sharpened round the edges.

The seeds used by the Basuto were millet, or "Kaffir corn," maize, or "mealies," and a species of sweet reed known as "Intsué," also pumpkins, and in times of famine they lived upon the seed of the long rank grass, which they call "Moseka."

When the crops were ripe the whole village went out to gather them. The pumpkins were stored in empty huts, the ripe heads of the Kaffir corn were cut off one by one, thrown into baskets and carried to a spot outside the cornfield which had already been prepared as a thrashing-floor, by removing all vegetation and smearing it over in the same manner as the floor of a hut. When the thrashing-floor was well covered with grain, the cattle were driven into it, and round and round, until the corn was all thrashed out. The cattle were then driven off, and the women separated the stalks or heads from the grain; then the baskets were filled, and the grain allowed to fall gently into a clean basket, thus getting rid of all dust and chaff, which was blown away by the air. Mealies were picked off

the stalk, thrown into baskets, and removed to the village where the women stripped the mealies from the cobs by means of small sharp stones, with which they used to hit off the mealies, holding the cob in the left hand on a large flat stone. The harvesting is still done in very much the same manner, save that flails are now used to thrash with in most parts of the country.

When the grain is dry it is stored in enormous bag-like baskets, sometimes 6 ft., and even more, in height. When full, these baskets are securely closed, and no one except the master of the house is allowed to open them. These baskets are kept outside, near the owner's hut, and in wet weather are covered with skins.

There is considerable jealousy over the harvesting, it being thought that the chief has shown great favouritism should one "land" yield a much better crop than another. To avoid unpleasantness, a man who sees his crop is larger than his neighbour's will dig a hole in some unfrequented spot, into which he will put one of the grain baskets, and at night he and his family will carry their grain to this hiding-place, carefully removing all traces likely to arouse the suspicions of any wanderer who might chance to pass by. When the time comes to visit this secret store for the purpose of removing the grain for the household use, the visits are paid only at night time, one member

of the family remaining at home to see that the movements of the others are not observed.

The chief food of the Basuto is a sort of porridge, made either of Kaffir corn or mealies, and a species of bread made from the white mealie.

The grain is ground by the women into meal on large, flat, smooth stones, with small round stones like rollers. The women kneel in front of the large stone, which they raise into a slanting position, so that as they grind the meal will fall on the skin laid under the lower end of the stone. They work the "roller" up and down the flat stone over the grain with a steady rhythmical motion, accompanying the movement with a low monotonous chant.

The "Motoho," or porridge, is made by merely stirring the meal into boiling water over a fire, until it is as thick as a stiff paste. If salt is procurable a little is added to the water before boiling. They also make a sour "Motoho," which is regarded as far more of a delicacy than the ordinary porridge. This is made by mixing extremely coarse meal with boiling water. Cover this mixture, and place on one side for a few moments. Pour into this a quantity of luke-warm water, and add a little "tomoso" (yeast). Leave this to "work" until the next morning, then remove all the meal, squeezing it as dry as possible, and grind it very finely; then put back into the same water, stir well, and strain and cook over a brisk

fire, stirring it all the time for nearly an hour. It is then ready to eat.

The "Bogobe," or bread, is made by pouring mealie meal into a pot of boiling water. Do not stir or break, and allow it to boil for about half an hour; then stir it and allow it to cook gently for about half an hour, then take it out and roll into large balls. Put a small quantity of water in the bottom of the pot; make a rest of small twigs to prevent the bread falling into the water, and cook for a long time, probably about an hour.

Sour bread, or "Bogobe bo bolila," is made by taking coarse mealie meal, mixing it with cold water and a little yeast. Put this stiff dough out into the sunshine to rise. When sufficiently risen it is rolled into flat, round loaves, and cooked in the same manner as the sweet "Bogobe."

Pumpkins are put whole into a pot of boiling water and boiled until ready.

Meat is as a rule grilled on the red ash of the fire, and by no means *over* done.

There are certain parts of an animal which the women are not allowed to eat, such as the kidney, heart, head, feet, stomach, and liver. This latter the women can eat raw if they like. Eggs are also forbidden.

Their drinks consist of "juāla," or strong beer, and "leting," or mild beer. These are both made from Kaffir corn. "Juāla" is made by soaking

the Kaffir corn in water for twenty-four hours. It is then put into a bag made from a hide. This bag is buried in the ground, and a fire lighted above every morning and again in the evening for three or four days, or until the corn begins to sprout. It is then spread out to dry, and when quite dry, it is ground very fine, put in a large pot, and a quantity of boiling water poured on it, with the addition of a little yeast. This is allowed to stand for a day and a night, and early next morning it is boiled; it is then put into several pots to cool. At night a quantity of fresh meal is stirred into each pot with enough luke-warm water to make it the consistency of thin gruel, and a little fresh yeast is added. The next morning it is strained ready to drink. It is by this time highly intoxicating.

"Leting" is made from Kaffir corn in the same way as "juāla" in the early stages, but after grinding the sprouting-grain and pouring the boiling water upon it with a little yeast, it is only left for a few hours to ferment, when it is strained and ready for use. It is a cool, sub-acid drink, very refreshing on a hot day, and only intoxicating when taken in enormous quantities, quite beyond the consumption of ordinary mortals.

The yeast, or "tomoso," is made by grinding a small quantity of green mealies and pouring enough luke-warm water over it to make a thick gruel

This is covered up and allowed to stand for twelve hours. The sieve, or "Motlotlo," is made of woven grass, about six in. in diameter at the mouth, and from a foot to a couple of feet long, narrowing to a point at the bottom.

The Basuto have only two meals a day, one corresponding to our breakfast, before the day's work begins; the other at sunset. The women prepare the food, while the men look after the cattle and superintend the milking. The men eat by themselves first, the women and children waiting until they have finished. The women carry the water, prepare the "lisu," or fuel, and do all the household work before going to help in the "land." The "lisu" is made from the manure in the cattle, sheep, and goat kraals. It is dug out and dried in the sun. When dry it somewhat resembles peat. It burns easily and gives out considerable heat, nothing but a fine white ash remaining.

The resources of the country at present are chiefly agricultural, large quantities of mealies and Kaffir corn being exported annually by the traders, also considerable quantities of wool, and during the outbreak of rinderpest numbers of hides passed into the traders' hands. The only means of transport is, of course, by waggon to the nearest railway station in the Orange River Colony, or to Aliwal North.

Near Mohali's Hoek a coalmine was opened some years ago, and very good coal obtained, but the present chief of the district will not allow it to be worked any longer, and I believe the mine is now nearly full of water. The country is certainly rich in minerals, and no doubt would yield large returns were it properly worked, but that is impossible under the existing conditions. Nor would it be desirable to alter those conditions at present. It is purely a native territory, the only white people allowed to settle in the country, not including the Government officials and their families, being the missionaries and traders, and at each Government station one or two European artisans. No liquor is allowed into the country without a permit issued and signed by the Assistant Commissioner of the district, who uses his own discretion in the matter. There are no canteens, consequently the number of inebriates is wonderfully small, and much of the degradation and misery of drunkenness is unknown. Would it be wise, merely for the sake of gain, to change this state by throwing the country open to the outside world? A thousand times *No.*

The principal articles imported into the country are blankets, cheap prints, beads, saddlery, showy ornaments, ploughs, kettles, three-legged pots, and tin dishes. There is also a great demand for sugar, salt, tea and coffee, and of course the

wealthier Basuto indulge in such luxuries as sardines, jam, sweets, &c.

Every Mosuto rides, even if he has only a very short distance to go. To walk must either show great poverty (a terrible disgrace in a country where no one need be really poor), or a great lack of self-respect. The ponies they ride are hardy, sure-footed little animals, wonderfully easily broken in, and showing quite remarkable intelligence. As a rule they are very good-tempered. To see them coming down the steep hillsides at a hard gallop, urged on by their reckless riders, who seem to have no fear, simply takes one's breath away at first, yet one never sees them stumble, much less fall, and they seem quite to enjoy it. Many of the Basuto now ride on saddles, but even thus they ride entirely by balance, and their idea of getting the pony to "go" is by kicking him vigorously in the sides.

The women of course ride "astride," but are timid and ill at ease, only adopting this mode of travelling when the time is short and the way long.

The boys begin at a very early age, learning first on goats and calves, going on to young oxen, and ending up with horses. An ox race is really a most exciting spectacle, and many a tumble these fearless young riders get.

The oxen are trained to carry the bags of grain, which are balanced across their backs. Their

noses are pierced, and a rope or reim run through the hole and fastened together to act as reins. In this way the boys are able to control the animals.

They guide them by hitting the horns on the opposite side from the direction in which they wish them to go. A Basutoland ox is seldom cross, and rarely kicks, very different from the vicious animals I saw in the Colony when I first came out. As a Mosuto's chief wealth lies in the number of cattle he possesses, he naturally takes a great interest in them, and acts of cruelty towards them are rare.

Almost all the heathen males possess at least two or three wives, and the families as a rule are large, most women having an average of from six to eight children.

The women are merely servants, little (if any) better than slaves, with few rights or privileges of their own, and utterly at the mercy of their husbands, who beat or pet them as so disposed.

Each wife has her own hut, her own "land," and her own children to look after, besides attending to the wants of her lord and master. The husband does the sowing and ploughing, but the woman does the weeding, watering, when necessary, and in fact, generally looks after her land, for the success or failure of which she is alone responsible.

Those who can afford to bribe with the offers of leting, jouala and other dainties, summon as many

of their friends as desired to help in the work of sowing and reaping. The chiefs call all the able-bodied young men and women of their "Clan," and much work and not a little merriment is crowded into the day, frequent refreshments being served out to the workers. This combining of forces is called a "letsima," and a very noisy affair it is. The men all come armed with hoes, and of course mounted on their active little ponies. A truly alarming sight they are at a little distance to the stranger, until, on a nearer approach, he sees they are not armed with weapons of war, but with implements of peace. Sometimes as many as eight or nine hundred may be seen in an afternoon, in more or less regular order, wending their way to the village of their chief, ready to begin work on the morrow.

In the morning they set out for the "lands," singing as they go. When they work, the men form in line and keep time with their hoes, or (if in autumn) their reaping hooks, to the chant they sing, while behind come the women, adding their shrill trebles to the men's deeper notes. It is all very wild, but wonderfully picturesque, and so perfectly in keeping with the surrounding scenery.

One cannot help envying the contentment and goodwill shown by all. Even the children have their share of the fun and feasting.

The maternal instinct is very strong in the

Basuto women, who devote themselves to each baby as it comes, with perfect good temper and constant care. As a rule baby number one attains to two or even three years before the arrival of baby number two, and so on.

Naturally, from a commercial point of view, the female children are much preferred to the male, for does not a daughter upon reaching womanhood represent a dowry of so many head of cattle to her father? while each son, should he live to manhood, means the loss of so many cherished bovine friends. But in childhood male and female children are all treated alike, all receive their due amount of affection and are equally dear to their parents' hearts, except in instances where the baby happens to be born after the death of the former baby. It is a terrible breach of etiquette to welcome this poor little stranger, besides being an insult to the departed infant, whose spirit would naturally resent anything which might indicate that the new-comer had consoled the parents for their loss.

No, the new arrival must be treated as an unwelcome intruder. All signs of affection (before others) must be suppressed.

It is called "Mose la'ntja," which means "the dog's tail," a term of the greatest contempt. No festivities greet its birth; no fat is smeared on its poor little body, nor is it correct for the

friends and neighbours to interest themselves about it. To add to this, the parents pretend to be angry with the little intruder for coming to fill the dead child's place.

Anything is good enough for "Mose la'ntja," all the old clothes fall to his or her share; if he or she is dirty and unkempt, so much the better. The more uncared-for their appearance the better their parents and relatives are pleased. It is the correct thing, quite a matter of etiquette, and these poor mites accept it all with perfect resignation, nor does it in any way affect their health or spirits.

This semi-persecution continues until "Mose la'ntja" has reached "years of discretion"—that is to say, after he or she has passed through the heathen "schools," when he becomes exempt from all restrictions.

As a rule all Basuto babies have their heads shaved when about two days old, with the exception of "Mose la'ntja," who is not allowed this privilege unless by the "family doctor's" orders.

In the old days the Basuto never in any way recognised Sunday, or had any regular religious observances; one day was just the same as another to them, except that it happened to be the first, second or third day of that particular "moon." They had no week-days such as we have, their manner of counting being simply the days of the

lunar month; but like us they observed four seasons of the year, answering to ours, namely Spring—Selemo (or delving time); Summer—Letlabula (or "It is opening," meaning vegetable life); Autumn—Hogobajua (or the fading or changing time); and Winter—Marea (or the time of heaviness).

Each calendar month has been given a suitable name, as follows:—

January, Pherekhong (to increase, to swell).

February, Thlakhola (to mature, because the grain is nearly ripe).

March, Thlakhobeli (maturity or harvest time).

April, Mbesa (the burning, because fires are now lighted in the lands to scare away the birds, it being no longer considered necessary to employ boys to keep away the winged thieves).

May, Motsey-anong (to complete, to become mature).

June, Phupo (to heap up, to store).

July, Phup'chane (to thrash).

August, Phāto (to break up, to delve).

September, Lœtsé (to water the land, *i.e.*, rain time).

October, 'Mpalane (the coming of storms).

November, Phulunguāna (the seed is coming).

December, Tsitue (the name of the small beetle which during that month disturbs the whole of South Africa with its clamour).

These are as nearly correct as I can get them, but the people seem strangely vague about such things as dates, times, and seasons.

Very few of them can tell you their age, or even the ages of their children. They count from certain national events which have made deep impressions upon their minds, such as the "Gun War," the great plague of locusts, the death of a certain chief, &c., &c.

Their mode of counting is quaint. They use the fingers of each hand, beginning with the little finger of the left hand, which is held in an upright position, the back of the hand facing the person counting, the palm turned outwards. Thus, when they wish to signify one, they raise one finger; for two, they raise two fingers, and so on, keeping the other fingers down on the palm.

Translated literally their numerals are:—

1 'Ngue.
2 Peli (pronounced pedi), two.
3 Tharo, three.
4 'Né (pronounced iu-né), four.
5 Thlano, five.
6 Tselela (crossing, meaning the act of crossing from one hand to the other).
7 Supile (pointing, because the first finger of the right hand, which is generally used for pointing at objects, is raised).

8 Robile Monuāna 'mbeli (two broken fingers, because only two fingers remain down).
9 Robile Monuāna u le Mong (one broken finger, only one remaining down).
10 Leshume (the whole).
11 Leshume le metso u le Mong (the whole and one root); and so on up to twenty, which is—
20 Mashomé a Mabeli (two tens or wholes).
30 being Mashomé a Meraro (three tens); and so on up to one hundred, which is—
100 Le kholo (the big thing).
1000 Seketé.

The hours of the day were naturally quite unknown to them, the sun, moon and stars, light and darkness, being their only guides; for instance, sunrise, midday, afternoon sunset, and night time being the terms used to represent the various periods into which their day was divided.

They possess few customs which might be strictly termed religious, most of their beliefs being superstitions connected with the spirits of their forefathers, to whom they pray in times of trouble, and of whom they stand in great awe, offering sacrifices from time to time, with the view of assuaging their wrath; but acts of praise or actual devotion were unknown until the introduction of Christianity.

They have a few musical instruments, all very

similar in appearance at first sight, but each varying a good deal with regard to the sounds produced. The simplest is the "Setolotolo," which is made by boring a hole in each end of a thick stick, into which are fixed two small pieces of cane, a piece about three inches long at the top, and one nearly double that length at the bottom. These are bent over and drawn towards each other by a thin wire or the twisted hairs from a horse's tail. The mouth of the musician is laid to the stick near the top, his left hand holds it near the bottom, while with the first finger and thumb of his right hand he touches the string at various distances from each end, at the same time making a peculiar little note in his own throat. The whole performance is weird and doleful in the extreme.

The "Seho," the "Lesiba," and in fact all the other musical instruments produce sounds the reverse of lively, but they are by no means harsh or unpleasing to the ear, and, heard in their native element, with the wild and picturesque surroundings of a Basuto village, or when played by the herds, leading (for cattle are never driven) the cattle to or from pasture, they certainly impress one favourably. The drum, on the other hand, is a thing to be shunned. It is made of bladder stretched over an earthenware pot which has had the bottom knocked out, to render the sound

more hollow. It is placed on two stones and played, not with two small (or one large) drum sticks as in civilized countries, but with the hands. A booming, melancholy howl, like a creature in torment, is the result at a distance. These drums are only used in the spring-time, when the girls are being called to the native "schools," and on the feast day which terminates the "school" for that year, usually a period of from four to six months, according to the amount of food and the number of girls in each "school." In November every year, night after night, the stillness is broken by these hideous drums. The girls' schools are conducted by old hags, who are supposed to be learned in all witchcraft, and to possess the "evil eye." These women profess to teach the girls to grind, weed, smear, cook, and, in fact, all household duties, in addition to many other instructions in "medicines," folk-lore, and some very barbarous practices, of which it is impossible to write.

A fortnight after the girls join the old women, they (the girls) smear themselves from head to foot with white clay, and wear a screen of small reeds in front of their faces. This has to be continued until their education is completed. During the whole period they never return home, but spend their time in the "lands" and kloofs. They sleep during the day and remain awake all night.

When they walk they carry long "doctored" sticks, which have the power of killing any outsider who dares to touch them. Many acts of cruelty and revenge are practised by these revolting old women under the guise of teaching the girls to be brave, or in some cases to be in their turn "wise women." Frequently a girl never returns to her home again. No questions dare be asked for fear of the "evil eye," but it is a recognised fact that she has been murdered, either because the wise woman has a spite against one or other of her parents, or against the girl herself; though, were such a thing even hinted at, dire would be the result. To the girls in the school it is stated that Molimo, or God, has said So-and-so must be sacrificed for the good of the others, or to make them brave or wise, or to save them or their families from destruction.

When the four or six months are over, a big feast is prepared in the village nearest the "school," to which both sexes come. Merry-making, eating and drinking continue for twenty-four hours. The girls then return home—"women" —with all the duties and privileges of womanhood. For a month they have to behave with great reserve to all around them, leaving home early in the morning and remaining away until dark. This closes that epoch in their lives.

The boys from sixteen years and upwards

assemble at the villages also in November, and are taken off to school by the old witch doctors, who train them in all acts of cruelty and bravery. Some of the acts committed by them are too horrible to bear repeating. They begin by torturing and killing animals, and then do the same thing to human beings. They are also instructed in the use of herbs and various medicines, and also in the methods of warfare adopted by the Basuto, as well as a considerable knowledge of natural history.

Of course, both the Government and the missionaries keep a strong check upon these schools and all barbarous customs, and the country is in a very much more enlightened state than it was even when I first came to it. The people are not naturally cruel, and are quick to see how Englishmen look upon acts of brutality. They also know that certain punishment awaits the perpetrators should they be discovered.

The Basuto women indulge in no amusements beyond the dance, singing, and gossip. The men play a game called "Morābarāba," a species of draughts played with white and black stones on a large flat stone cut into squares like a chessboard.

CHAPTER IV.

CHIEF WARS — MOROSI — DEATH OF MOLAPO — INFLUENCE OF THE MISSIONARIES—COLONEL GRIFFETH — GENERAL GORDON — 1843 TO PRESENT TIME—GOVERNMENT HUT TAX—MISSION SOCIETIES.

THE chief wars, apart from tribal disturbances, in which the Basuto have been engaged, are the Basuto-Dutch War, 1863-1868; the Morosi Campaign in 1879; and the Gun War in 1880-1881.

The Basuto-Dutch War of 1863 to 1868 was caused by the long-continued plundering of the Basuto all along the border. At that time Moshesshue was growing old, his people were half-starving savages, with large bands of cannibals among them.

The Orange Free State was rich in grain and in flocks and herds; the Mosuto is always at heart a cattle thief; he knows no temptation so great as that of "cattle lifting." No wonder, then, that, with the added force of starvation and their hatred of the Boers, the Basuto took to plundering those homesteads near the border.

In addition to this, the young "braves" thought they were too strong even for the English power to subdue—the result of the retreat of Sir George

Cathcart in 1852, which they looked upon as a sign of weakness on our part, and they received no check from Mosheshue, who seems to have allowed his people a free hand. Undoubtedly they had great cause to hate the Boers for the many wrongs received from them, and to this day there is no love lost between Boer and Basuto. But we will enter into this subject later on.

The eventual result of these devastations was war, which raged for five years between the two nations. At first the Basuto were everywhere victorious; hunger was no longer known in their midst, and they became boastful, vain-glorious, and altogether over-confident. Then came the Boers' turn. Their commandos entered the Lesuto, which they conquered bit by bit, until the whole country of the northern part, from what is now called Winburg to Thaba Bosigo, was in their hands. This strong fortress had resisted all attempts to conquer it; but the Basuto were thoroughly frightened, and Mosheshue, dreading to fall into the hands of the Dutch, earnestly entreated the Governor of Cape Colony (Sir Philip Wodehouse) to protect them. Accordingly, the Lesuto was proclaimed British territory under the Colonial Government, and the Dutch were requested to return to the Free State. Soon afterwards the Governor went to Thaba Bosigo, when

he laid down, with President Brand, the boundary of what is now the Lesuto, and which deprived the Basuto of that fertile tract of country, west of the Caledon River, which has since been called the conquered territory. Colonel Griffeth was appointed Commissioner, and the country became subject to British rule in 1869.

In 1879, Dodo Morosi's son, who had been imprisoned in Quthing prior to his removal to the Colony, escaped from prison, and joined Morosi on his famous mountain near Quthing. These two chiefs had always been rebels at heart, and only needed a little encouragement to become so openly. At that time Cetewayo was doing his utmost to stir up the Basuto, urging them to join him against the British Government. The Basuto have always looked upon the Zulu chief as, in a way, their head, to whom they owed a certain amount of obedience, and to whom they paid tribute of karosses, ostrich feathers, etc. Consequently, when the disaster of Isandhlala became known in the Lesuto, the people became almost ungovernable with excitement. Colonel Griffeth formed a camp at Pathlahla Drift, where he was joined by several of his staff, and by 400 Colonial troops, augmented by 1,200 loyal Basuto. Mr. Barkly, the magistrate of Mohali's Hoek, was appointed Staff Officer to Colonel Griffeth during the siege of Morosi Mountain, while Colonel (now

General) Brabant, with 150 men, was sent up early in April to aid the besiegers.

Morosi was a Baputi Chief under the rule of the Paramount Chief. At this time he was an old man, almost completely under the influence of his son Dodo, a crafty, rebellious, and cruel man, who had been imprisoned and heavily fined by Mr. Austin, magistrate of Quthing, but had, as I have already stated, made his escape. Morosi now openly rebelled, whereupon the Colonial Government, through Colonel Griffeth, ordered the Basuto to enforce obedience. Thus, in April, the attack began, but many of the Basuto, though not themselves in open rebellion, refused to take up arms against their "brother." Consequently, there was not a sufficiently strong attacking force, and the first attempt was a complete failure, resulting in a loss of about fifty killed and wounded on our side. The mountain is very steep, and the whole face was protected by schanzes, or stone walls; stones also were hurled by the besieged upon their foes as they endeavoured to scale the mountain. Our force had a couple of field guns, which were of considerable service. The attack lasted from 5 A.M. till 8 P.M., during which time the besiegers were entirely without food. I am indebted to one who was a member of the C.M.R. present at the siege for the above information. The "Colonies and India," of June 1879, says:—"After

the failure of the attempt to storm the enemy's position, and while awaiting the arrival of heavier cannon, the investment of the mountain still continued, pickets being posted day and night round three sides of it, the fourth being a perpendicular krantz of many feet in height.

"Notwithstanding all the vigilance and precautions taken, one of the pickets, consisting of a troop of the 3rd Yeomanry, were surprised on the night of the 29th instant. About two hundred of the enemy rushed into their camp, overpowering the sentries and assegaing some of the men in their tents. The Yeomanry, after six hours' fighting, beat them off, but not without sustaining a loss of six killed and fifteen wounded.

"There is but one path leading to the summit of the mountain, which is fortified by strongly-built stone walls, arranged with great skill, so that the lower ones are commanded and can be enfiladed by those above them. They are pierced by double rows of loopholes, and, in most cases, are situated on the verge of steep rocks, which render them almost inaccessible from below. The mountain was crowded with every kind of stock, and defended by several hundred Baphuti rebels under Morosi."

The siege dragged on until November of the same year (every effort to storm the mountain failing), when the enemy were starved into a sur-

render. Morosi and two of his sons were killed, and the others surrendered as soon as the C.M.R., who were the first to scale the ladders, had entered the stronghold with fixed bayonets, with which they attacked the starving garrison. Dodo, however, unfortunately escaped, but the greater number of the enemy were killed.

In September, previous to this event, Sir Gordon Sprigg (the then Premier of the Cape Colony) visited the Lesuto in connection with the Disarmament Act, which had just been passed by the Colonial Government, and a great Pitso was held at Maseru on the 16th of October (1879) to inform the Basuto that the Act was to be extended to the Lesuto. It was a most unfortunate time to select for the enforcement of such a law. The Basuto love their guns, and no amount of compensation would repay them for the loss of their firearms. In addition, the whole nation was unsettled, first by the Zulu Campaign, and afterwards by the fighting at Morosi's Mountain. They only needed tangible excuse to break out into open rebellion. That excuse the Government placed before them when it insisted upon the disarming of the whole nation. Chiefs and people alike were furious, and, though no immediate steps were taken by the Government, the whole country seemed on the brink of a volcano.

Early in 1880 a commission was appointed for

each district, consisting of the magistrate, the principal chief of the district and the most influential trader. A fair and just value was to be given to each man upon delivering up his weapon or weapons. The Colonial Government completely ignored the fact that it was to blame in the first instance for the number of guns in the country, and that it had employed the Basuto to fight for it; in fact, was actually doing so at the time when the Act was passed, when it employed Basuto to aid in the siege of Morosi's Mountain. A deputation of chiefs was sent to Cape Town, but their petition was refused. Even the majority of the missionaries regarded the policy of the Colonial Government as an act of unnecessary oppression, and many of them did not hesitate to say so openly.

On the 28th of June the wise old chief Molapo died in the north of Basutoland, and his death no doubt hastened matters, for, had he lived, he would have used all his influence, which was considerable, on the side of the Government. His sons Joel and Jonathan succeeded him, but Joel was always strongly against the Government, and Jonathan was a young man without much power over the other chiefs. The French Protestant missionaries, though earnestly exhorting the people to refrain from bloodshed, were known by the Basuto to sympathise with them; consequently,

their persons, homes, and mission stations were untouched during the rebellion which followed. The Roman Catholic Missions, which also belonged to the French, likewise remained unmolested, but the English missionaries and their stations fared badly indeed. The one at Mohale's Hoek was utterly destroyed. At Sekubu in the north everything perishable was burnt, the stone buildings alone remaining standing, and the mission buildings at Thlotse fared hardly better, the church to this day (though no longer used as such, having been replaced by a much larger building) bearing many marks of the conflict. The Government fixed upon the 12th of July as the day for the final disarmament of the people. Many loyalists sent in their arms, a course of action which resulted in many real hardships for them, and to this day the greater number have never received more than two-thirds (if that) of the compensation owed them by the Government, though many rebels received full compensation. Chief Jonathan remained loyal throughout, and, by his firmness, kept together a large following, who were of the greatest possible assistance to Major Bell, the magistrate of Leribe.

Canon Widdicombe gives a most interesting and graphic account of the fighting in the north in his book, "Fourteen Years in Basutoland." The actual fighting began on the 19th of July near the centre

of the Lesuto, and soon rebellion became general throughout the country. In September a few hundred C.M. Rifles were sent up to Southern Basutoland by the Colonial Government, but nothing was done for the North. Mafeteng in the south was first attacked on the 13th September; Lerotholi, with a following of over 8,000 men, all mounted, opening the proceedings by a vigorous attack upon the station. Fortunately the rebels were repulsed with great loss. On October 4th the trading station of Lipering, belonging to the Messrs. Fraser, was attacked and destroyed; Maseru and Mohale's Hoek were attacked about the same time.

On the 19th October General Clarke, Commander-in-Chief of the Colonial forces, succeeded in reaching and relieving Mafeteng, but with heavy loss, the 1st Yeomanry alone losing 32 killed and 11 wounded. The former lie buried in the little cemetery at Mafeteng, where a monument has been erected to their memory. On November 8th the first attack was made upon Thlotse in the north. It was sudden and very well planned, but nevertheless it failed. Five thousand "braves" under Chief Joel made the attack at daybreak, but most fortunately heavy rain had fallen, causing the Thlotse River to become impassable, and thus preventing Ramanella and his contingent from joining in the attack. The defending force was only

140 strong. As soon as the river became fordable, Jonathan crossed into Thlotse with nearly 2,000 loyal followers. What that poor little garrison suffered can be but little imagined. Many acts of revolting cruelty were perpetrated by the rebels; Jonathan's village was burnt to the ground, and all his flocks and herds carried off, while he and his small following took refuge in Thlotse, the whole country from there to Maseru being by this time in the hands of the rebels. A force of nearly 300 of the Kimberley Horse, under Major Lawrance, was sent from Maseru to the aid of the Thlotse garrison, and most effectively they fulfilled their mission, driving off an enemy ten times their own size right across the Thlotse River, almost into the mountains. This state of affairs continued all through the country until the 17th of April, 1881, when an armistice was made, followed by a treaty of peace, for the unusually hard winter had at length proved the "last straw" to the rebels, who, worn out with fighting and hardships, eventually realized the futility of attempting to overcome the "White Man." Unfortunately, the Colonial Government, in its anxiety to bring the war to an end, was ready for peace at any price. A little firmness for a month or two longer, and the Basuto would have been completely conquered. They were in real distress for food, and were unfit to stand the hardships of the winter months of June and July;

but the Government apparently did not see the matter in this light, and on April 29th the new Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, issued a proclamation which promised a fair indemnity for their loss to the loyal Basuto, and was by no means severe upon the rebels; but the promises were never properly fulfilled, and to this day there is many a sore heart and shaken faith in the word of the English to be found in Basutoland.

Colonel Griffeth pointed out the unwisdom of such conduct, but he was granted a year's leave of absence, after which he was pensioned. It would be a moral lesson to many were they to hear a Mosuto's opinion of this act, though it is extremely galling to realise how British prestige suffered for many months, morally and physically, and the marks of her degradation will remain for ever. Oh! how can people wish to bring civilization into a country, when it brings such suffering in its train!

In April, 1881, General Gordon had offered his services to the Colonial Government, but it was not until September, 1882, that they availed themselves of his offer. He then proceeded to Basutoland, where at any rate he won the admiration and affection of all those Basuto who came in contact with him. His stay in the country was short. Let my reader refer to Sir W. Butler's Life of Gordon for the reason. Again the Government

had thrown away the chance of permanent settlement.

In 1883 came the war between Joel and Jonathan, the two great chiefs of the North, which resulted in the overthrow of Joel, who with his followers fled to the Free State. Captain Blyth, C.M.G., was at that time "Governor's Agent" of Basutoland; but as he had only moral force with which to govern the people, what could he do except report to Cape Town all that had occurred? At length, in November, 1883, Basutoland was taken over by the Imperial Government, and early in 1884, Sir Marshall Clarke (Lt.-Col., R.A.) was sent as Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, under the control of the High Commissioner.

From this time a more hopeful state of things ensued, though even to the present time there are not infrequent inter-tribal wars, squabbles, and jealousies to "keep the country from going to sleep."

Basutoland is a native territory under Imperial Government. In 1868, the country was annexed to the British Empire, though in December, 1843 Mosheshue signed a treaty with England, in which the boundaries of his country were defined as the Orange River, from its source to its junction with the Caledon, and a line about thirty miles north-east of the Caledon, from Bethulie to Sikonyela's country. This did not at all meet with the

approval of Mosheshue, and quietly he extended his sway, while the British authorities were engaged in settling matters with Adam Kok, the emigrant farmers, and various others. From 1847 to 1851 there were constant "strained relations" between Mosheshue and the British Government, ending in an alliance between him and the emigrant farmers. England was then not in a position to enforce obedience from Mosheshue, and his affairs were allowed to drift until such time as force could be brought to bear to ensure his subjugation.

In the end of 1852, General Cathcart, with a force of 2,000 Infantry, 500 Cavalry, and two field guns, marched upon Basutoland, and sent a message to Mosheshue asking him how he intended to behave, and demanding the delivery of 10,000 head of cattle and 1,000 horses within a week. Mosheshue endeavoured to comply with this demand, but the Basuto love their cattle, and could not be induced to part with more than 4,000 head. They were also anxious to try their strength against the English, and would not listen to their chief when he endeavoured to show them how futile would be their efforts. The result was that on the 20th December, the British forces advanced to attack, and it was upon that day that the awful ride of a small body of Lancers down an almost precipitous ravine took place.

It happened thus. The cavalry were ordered to march to the north of Berea Mountain, but seeing a great number of cattle apparently unguarded on the top of the hill, they tried to secure them. Suddenly a strong force under Molapo advanced, scattering cattle and foes in all directions. Had it not been for the bravery of Colonel Napier, our loss would have been very severe; but he, with the small party round him, attacked the Basuto, thus giving many of our men a chance to escape. One small body of Lancers mistook an almost precipitous ravine for the bridle-path, and charged down it at a gallop; those who were not killed in the descent rushing headlong into the midst of an armed force of Basuto at the bottom. To this day the spot is called "Lancers' Gap," and many Basuto tales are told of that ride to death of the brave "Ma-Soldier" of the Great White Queen, or "Mofumahali" as they call her. The Basuto fought well, and showed considerable bravery. They were nearly all armed with guns or rifles, in addition to their native weapons; but the coolness and bravery of our small force against such vast numbers alarmed them, and Mosheshue pointed out that they could not hope to overcome the strong reinforcements which would follow. After a hurried counsel the Basuto fled during the night to the most inaccessible mountains; and thus, after two

days' hard fighting, ended the advance of the British troops.

Mosheshue wrote a most diplomatic letter to General Cathcart, on the advice of the French Missionary M. Casalis, saying he had seen the power of the English; he had been corrected; he now desired peace, and would never again become an enemy to the Queen. The General accepted the apology, and retired across the Caledon.

Into the advisability, or otherwise, of this step I prefer not to enter. Theal, in his "History of the Boers in South Africa," enters fully into the subject, and gives a very good account of the after effects of General Cathcart's step, as also the General's reasons for taking it.

Basutoland was taken over by the Colonial Government in 1870, the "Gun War" following in 1871, in consequence of the Colonial Government endeavouring to enforce the Disarmament Act. After the conclusion of the second "Gun War" (1880-1882), Basutoland reverted to Imperial rule. It is directly under the control of the Resident Commissioner, who lives at Maseru, and has under him seven Assistant Commissioners, one in each district, a Government Secretary at headquarters, and a dozen Sub-Inspectors in charge of the different detachments of native police, stationed in each district. Each detachment has also one

or two European constables, according to the number of police and the size of the district.

The Resident Commissioner has a difficult position to fill. He is responsible to the High Commissioner on the one hand, and has to win the confidence and favour, not only of the Paramount Chief, but of the whole nation on the other, and to maintain the prestige of British supremacy without going too closely into purely native matters. The chiefs have considerable power up to a certain point, but are answerable to the Paramount Chief first, and through him to the Resident Commissioner, for the exercise of that power. They hold courts for the settlement of all native matters, save those of grave importance, which are dealt with by the Assistant Commissioners. Natives are always allowed to appeal to the Assistant Commissioner of their district against the decision of their own court or "Khotla," but no appeal is possible to even the Paramount Chief against the decision of the Government. In murder cases, and others of equally grave importance, two Assistant Commissioners must "sit in judgment." All sentences are referred to the Resident Commissioner for confirmation. All "liquor" cases are brought to the Assistant Commissioner of the district. The police patrol the country, and bring in cases for trial, and report any suspicious events. There are post offices at all the Government stations, under the

supervision of the Assistant Commissioners, and most of the stations are now possessed of telegraphic communication. There is also a medical service, consisting of the Principal Medical Officer, resident at Maseru, and a Medical Officer at most of the stations, with a staff of native dispensers. Medical attendance is free to all officials and their families, and to the police; and also to the whole nation between the hours of ten to twelve daily, at the dispensary, a nominal fee of sixpence being charged by the Government to cover the cost of the medicine received.

The revenue is considerable, and is chiefly derived from the hut tax. This is a tax levied on each wife in reality, though it is nominally on the hut. It used to be 10s. for each hut, but has now been raised to £1 each. A man having two wives pays £2, though he may have three or more huts, and so on.

The expenditure consists of the salaries of all Government officials, including natives, cost of maintaining the roads, educational grants, and building and repairing of Government buildings, with various other minor expenses connected with the administration, pensions, &c. The work of education is a heavy item, there being over 100 schools. The Missionary Societies are the Paris Evangelical, the Anglican and the Roman Catholic. I have placed them in the order in which they

stand. The French missionaries were the first to visit Basutoland, and are a big majority. They have done much for the Basuto, apart from religious instruction and example, for in the early days of their arrival they taught the people the use of many cereals and plants, of which, till then, they were ignorant, and also how to build, to plough, and reap, and the European methods of irrigation, as well as introducing into the country various domestic animals, such as the pig, the cat, and a dog, superior to the miserable specimens already to be found in the villages. Fowls, turkeys, ducks, and geese were also first introduced by the missionaries.

There are now several industrial schools in different parts of the country, in which the boys are taught masonry, carpentry, blacksmith's and painter's trades, besides the three "R's." Many of these boys show considerable ability, and are painstaking and neat in their work, taking a real pride in it.

At Morija, the largest mission station in Basutoland, as well as the first, it having been founded by MM. Casalis, Arbousset, and Gossellin in 1833, not only are there four missionaries employed, but quite a large number of assistant teachers and instructors of various branches of education. There is the Bible School, which trains natives for missionary work; the Normal School for teachers;

a printing and publishing establishment, where Sesuto books, pamphlets, and a monthly newspaper are published, and in which all the work is done by natives, under European supervision. Then there is the Mission School, in which the children are taught. Twice Morija was nearly destroyed, in the Boer invasions in 1858, and again in 1865, but nevertheless it is now a flourishing station, nestling in a hollow at the foot of the mountains. Here also are to be found on some of the rocks the footprints of an enormous lizard, and traces of the haunts of lions and other beasts of prey.

CHAPTER V.

THABA BOSIGO—CANNIBALS—THEIR MANNER OF CAPTURING AND DESTROYING THEIR VICTIMS —SUPERSTITIONS—LAND TENURE.

NEAR Morija rises *the* mountain of Basutoland, Thaba Bosigo! Surely no other spot in the country contains so much history as this small mountain, where Mosheshue first took his stand, and where he and all the principal chiefs of the past now lie buried.

Thaba Bosigo rises abruptly from the plain around it. The sides are very steep, and in many parts precipitous, especially near the top. There are narrow zig-zag paths by which the people ascend and descend, but of these there are not more than half a dozen, and when Mosheshue lived there they were all strongly fortified, so that the mountain was practically impregnable. The remains of the fortifications are still to be seen. The top of the mountain is peculiar, a great part of it being covered with waves of sand; but there is plenty of pasture and a good water supply.

Before and during the time of Mosheshue many of the Basuto were cannibals, but it is supposed they originally became so from starva-

tion, rather than from choice. Some years ago there lived at Thlotsi an old woman, who in her girlhood had a wonderful escape from a band of cannibals. She was fat and young, a truly tempting object, and she was all alone, walking to the "lands" from her home. They seized and bound her, and carried her off to their lair. Here they amputated both little fingers, and removed her upper lip; then placing her in the pot of warm water they left her to bleed to death while they went to collect firewood; but she happening to be a particularly robust, determined damsel, removed herself during their absence, and managed to gain her home, where her wounds were attended to, and she rapidly recovered. Many years afterwards, as she was preparing the porridge for breakfast, outside her hut, two old men came up and asked for food. She looked up, recognised them as two of her former captors and—gave them breakfast. The spot where she was caught was the death trap of many a poor victim, and now it is believed to be haunted. Strange tales have been told by people who have tried to pass there at night. Shadowy forms have been seen seated in a ring, chanting weird songs, while from the centre of the ring have issued smoke, and the cries and groans of the victims. A horseman, too, has been seen to ride up in haste, though no sound of hoofs has

disturbed the night; but on his approach the ghostly company has dispersed. I know of one or two other spots visited in the same way by "ghosts," which are known to have been the abodes of cannibals. In the north of Basutoland there still live two old people, a man and a woman, no connection or relationship exists between them, but each has been in youth a cannibal, and in the eyes of the Basuto they are each branded with the evidence of their crimes, for each has white spots on the skin, which are gradually increasing in size—a sure sign, according to Basuto superstition, of cannibalism, as these spots were not there in childhood, not even in middle age. Very few Basuto have been known to bear this "hall mark." It is very peculiar, generally beginning as a small round white mark, not as big as a marble, under the arm, which increases in size and is joined by others, until it is supposed to resemble a hand (a very clumsy one, certainly).

The Basuto are the people of the crocodile (Kuena), or as it is in Sesuto, "Bakuena," the crocodile being their sacred animal. They believe that one crocodile still exists in the Caledon, but I have never met any one who had seen it. Still they cling to this belief, for what would Basutoland be without its Kuena? There is no need to see it, it is there. It will not desert its people, so why should they disturb it? Are not the chiefs its

especial people? and they are not influenced by idle curiosity to prove its actual existence.

At one time, no doubt, there were crocodiles in the larger rivers, as there were lions and tigers in the mountains—in fact, the country abounded with wild animals; but at the present day, save for a few elands, and buck of various sorts, there are none, unless one includes baboons and an occasional silver jackal, and rarer still, a "tiger" as it is called, which I believe is in reality a leopard.

Some sort of belief in the transmigration of souls is evidently indulged in by the Basuto, for they will tell you quite solemnly that such and such a snake is the spirit of So-and-so's grandfather, and that the spirit of another ancestor has revisited the earth in the form of a dog or baboon. They firmly believe in the efficacy of charms, or certain portions of an animal or human being to ward off the evil spirits, or to give courage or special strength, or again to endow with "second sight." The charms are worn on the body; the portions of flesh are burnt, then ground to a fine powder, mixed with some vile concoctions by the "medicine man," and drunk by those desirous of receiving the special quality desired. In the old days much wealth could be made by the medicine men out of the heart of a white man, the people believing that to drink the medicine made from it would

endow them with the courage and mental abilities of "le khuoa" (the white man.)

The Basuto, like most native races in South Africa, are distinctly conservative as regards their superstitions and laws, any changes in the customs of their forefathers being looked upon with much suspicion and strong disfavour as a rule. They still cling to their belief in witchcraft, in "throwing the bones," in ghosts, in the evil water-spirits, and in the "evil eye." Their traditions are handed down from generation to generation by men who make it their business to learn, even to the most minute detail, all the folk lore, history, superstitions, and customs of their nation. They are an emotional people, easily moved to tears or laughter, more like uncontrolled children than men and women. They believe that their witch doctors can find out anything, and can call down the lightning god's wrath upon any individual, who will, unless he is able to propitiate promptly the deity, be struck by lightning ere many days have passed. These witch doctors are also rain-makers, and greatly in request in the dry seasons; but they are extremely clever, and take pains to study the signs in the heavens before committing themselves in any way. When they can be persuaded into praying for rain, they seldom fail to bring it; thus the belief in their superhuman powers is unbounded.

With regard to the land, it is all practically in the possession of the Paramount Chief; but each householder has a right to as much as he can cultivate, and each chief owns large tracts of country, subject, of course, to the approval of the Paramount Chief, who has power to give or take away as he deems desirable, though certain of the principal chiefs, notably the sons of old Molapo, are too powerful for him to interfere with, unless supported by the Government.

Pasture is free to all, but certain tracts of pasturage are marked off by each chief as winter grazing, other as summer grazing, and cattle found feeding on one or the other out of season are impounded until the owner has been caught and reprimanded or fined, according to the enormity of his offence.

There are no rates nor land taxes, neither can the land be sold; but the people give a certain amount of help to their chief in the cultivation of his land, and the Paramount Chief has power to summon the whole population to his aid, did he desire to do so.

The chief conducts all his legal affairs at the entrance of the "Khotla," or court-house, a large, empty hut situated in the centre of the village, with a big open space in front, where the people assemble to hear and to give evidence. In the doorway, on a mat or kaross, the chief sits, with

his head-man beside him, while on either hand are seated his councillors. No women are ever allowed to be present. Any one can have a hearing, no matter how trivial his evidence or grievance may be, and in any serious offence the longer the list of witnesses the better every one is pleased. It is no unusual thing for a trial to last several days, and the interest is as keen at the end as at the commencement.

When a chief dies he is succeeded by the eldest son of his principal wife. Should she have no sons, then the eldest son of the second wife succeeds, unless for some exceptional reason a special son is chosen in his father's lifetime and presented to the people as their future chief. A woman rarely succeeds to the chieftainship.

Most of the European houses in Basutoland are built of brick, and are by no means substantial; but there are some very good stone buildings, and the country is certainly not lacking in suitable rock from which to build. In some instances raw brick is used and plaistered inside and out and afterwards whitewashed. Our first home at Mafeteng was a little whitewashed thatched cottage, with mud floors and calico ceiling, the calico merely being caught up and tacked here and there to a beam in the roof. In the rainy season the water used to pour in at the back door (the house was built on the slope of a hill), and if not

promptly directed into a more desirable course would speedily threaten to drive us out of house and home. As a rule the houses are small, except those of the Assistant Commissioners, and of course the Residency and Government Secretary's houses at Maseru. One or two of the more wealthy traders are now beginning to build better houses and shops; but when we first entered the country, the majority of the buildings were very poor specimens of the builder's art.

At Leribe there is a funny little fort built inside the prison enclosure at the time of the "Gun War," and which stands sturdily facing all weathers to the present day, though it is the roughest of workmanship.

Every spring the grass is burnt through the length and breath of Basutoland, which makes it very rank and coarse, and what is called "sour veldt." No wonder there are few wild flowers to be seen, save in the kloofs of the mountains. There are not many ferns, but the maidenhair grows in glorious profusion. The only wild fruits to be found are a small, very inferior blackberry, the wild raspberry, and the dwarf cape gooseberry.

The Basuto ponies are supposed to be descendants of some Shetland ponies which were imported into the Eastern Province of Cape Colony about the year 1840, and were soon after lost

sight of in the Stormberg Mountains, and are supposed to have wandered into Basutoland. Certainly some of them are even now small enough to be "Shelties," and are not unlike them in shape.

CHAPTER VI.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS—DEATH CUSTOMS.

WHEN a youth wishes to marry, he does not go to his father and ask for a wife. Such a course would be most disrespectful, and altogether wanting in etiquette. The young men before marriage are not supposed to make requests, or to converse much with their elders. Their duties are chiefly those of herds; the elder boys or youths looking after the cattle, and the smaller boys guarding the sheep and calves. But to return, when a youth wishes to marry, he gets up very early one morning and takes out his father's cattle to the pasture without milking the cows, and lets the calves run with their mothers and drink all the milk. No notice of this is taken on his return, and the same course is pursued by him for thirty days. All his companions leave him severely alone, and nickname him "the silly one." On the thirtieth day his father says, "Surely my son wants to get married." This remark is repeated to the youth, and the next day the cattle return to their former habits and are milked as usual, but on the first morning of their milking the youth must do it unaided. All this milk is then poured into a pot and made into butter. The

butter is boiled and poured into a new pot, and kept to anoint the prospective bridegroom's face. No questions are asked as to whom the youth wishes to marry. His wishes are very secondary considerations, and not to be weighed for a moment against those of his father. If the wife selected by his father does not happen to be the "lady of his heart," he is at liberty to choose a second wife for himself, as soon as he can pay the dowry or persuade his father to pay it for him, for when he is a married man, he is on an equality with his father, and can consult him or ask for his help.

After the episode with the cattle, the youth's father will select a girl, and go to talk over matters with her father. After they have agreed as to the number of cattle required for the dowry, about a month is allowed to elapse, at the end of which time the cattle are chosen (as a rule, thirty head are required, but occasionally fifteen or twenty, with a horse or a few sheep and goats thrown in, will suffice). The bridegroom's father prepares a small feast, the mother makes a large quantity of "leting" (mild beer), and all the friends and relations on his side regale themselves. The bridegroom then takes out the remaining cattle to pasture, while his father and male friends start off with the dowry. Some little distance before they reach the bride's home two cattle are chosen from

the herd, a male and a female, to represent the bridegroom's parents; these are driven at a gallop through the village and into the kraal. This is supposed to represent the impatience of the parents to welcome their new daughter. The other cattle are driven leisurely along, the herds lustily singing the Basuto wedding song. These cattle are also shut up in the kraal on their arrival. All the relations and friends of the bride then seat themselves on one side of the entrance to the kraal, while the bridegroom's procession sit on the opposite side. For a short time dead silence prevails, until the bride's father (who hitherto has not appeared) joins the party and greets the strangers, after which every one is allowed to talk. The bull and heifer are then driven out and commented upon after the usual manner, very fulsome remarks and compliments being exchanged. No girls must be seen anywhere about, and the bride must be shut up in her father's hut, and the mother in another hut by herself.

After a few pleasantries the bride's father goes to tell his wife his opinion of the cattle. He then calls for "Juala" (strong beer), the first pot being given to the two men who drove in the bull and heifer. After they have drunk as much as they can, they say—

"We are coming to borrow a cup of water for our son."

The bride's father asks—"How many cattle have you brought?"

They reply "Thirty," or whatever the number may be.

The cattle are then counted, and every one drinks again.

The bridegroom's companions now begin to dance, and all the girls of the village must join in the dancing, with the exception of the bride and three chosen companions. This is continued till dark, all the bridegroom's procession sleeping in the bride's village for the night. The next morning the bride's father chooses the fattest ox he possesses and has it killed, thus showing the bargain is completed. Should there be no ox killed, then the bridegroom's father knows there is some hitch, either the dowry is not sufficient, or a more eligible suitor has come forward. A little tact and patience is necessary to find this out, as no direct questions may be asked. If it is merely a matter of dowry, a bargain is made, and, upon the arrival of the extra cattle, the proceedings continue. After the ox is killed, the dewlap is cut off and divided into two strips, one of which is bound round the girl's wrist, and the other sent to the bridegroom to be bound round his wrist. This signifies that they are now bound to each other. The bridegroom's father then sends for a big ox, which is killed, and the skin

given to the bride's mother. All that day there is feasting and merry-making. The next day the bridegroom's procession returns home. For a period of from one to three months from this time the bridegroom continues to herd his father's cattle, and life goes on much as usual, except that the father and mother set about preparing their son's future home. When the necessary time has expired, the bride sets out for her husband's home, accompanied by two girl companions and two old women. On leaving her father's house she must not say good-bye to her parents, nor must she speak or look back until she reaches her husband. To look back or bid farewell would show regret, and be an insult to her lord. Silence is enjoined, because her first word must be her greeting to him. As a rule several of her girl friends accompany her part of the way, laughing and singing, and doing all in their power to make her either speak or look back. While they are yet some little distance from the bridegroom's village, they come to a standstill, the old women obstinately refusing to go any farther until some suitable gift is presented to them. The watchers at the village, who have seen all this byplay, and quite understand what it means, hasten to tell the bridegroom's father, who at once sends out either some wearing apparel, an ox, or young animal. As soon as the sun sets, the bride enters the

village, being conducted straight to the bridegroom's house. She and her four companions must remain perfectly silent, nor must they accept any refreshment from the bridegroom's mother until his father has killed and roasted a sheep and offered a portion of it to them to eat. The girl must be kept at her mother-in-law's hut for the night, and remain perfectly silent. A number of wedding guests now assemble, and feasting and singing continue all night. In the morning the bride's friends return to their homes.

For the next month the bride is instructed in all household work by her mother-in-law, and carries all the water from the well for the use of the houshold. While going to fetch water she must neither turn her head nor speak, no matter who may accost her. While in the "skerm," or even in the hut, she is allowed to converse in low tones with any one who comes in, but her voice must not be raised either in anger or laughter. All this time remarks are freely made in her hearing as to her attractions or lack of such, and very outspoken are those remarks.

Meanwhile, the bridegroom endeavours by every means in his power to see and speak to his bride, but on no account must others see him near the hut, and his mother keeps watch more or less strictly, as she happens to be more or less favourably disposed towards his bride. The consequence

is that the bridegroom creeps round the hut whenever he gets away from observation, and, should he be fortunate enough to find his bride alone in the "skerm," he crawls in and talks to her in low tones while she is grinding, for, upon seeing him enter in that manner, she knows he is her husband, and instantly begins grinding. Should any one be heard approaching the hut, the bridegroom will at once disappear. When the month of probation is ended, the bride is conducted to her own hut, and freed from all restrictions.

It is the custom of the wife, some few months afterwards, to take her pitcher to the well, break it, and leave the broken pieces where they will be seen, and run away to her own parents, without giving any one a hint as to her intentions. Her mother will at once make her a new pitcher. When it is ready she and her friends will set out for her own home, laden with pots of "leting," and in some cases driving an ox before them. Her return is the signal for renewed feasting and merry-making.

Of course, now that the missionaries have introduced European marriage customs, a great many of these native rites and ceremonies are done away with, a Christian native's marriage being conducted on the same lines and subject to the same rules as a white man's, the bride even adorning herself with cheap (in quality, but not in

price) white finery, with the orthodox wreath and veil, in which, poor creature, did she but know it, she looks extremely ridiculous. She is attended by bridesmaids, all decked out in bright colours, and the bridegroom and best man are resplendent in brand-new suits, white dress shirts, and upright collars, with gorgeous ties.

A Mosuto has no objection to marriage with a blood relation, provided she will prove a desirable connection, and it is the custom for the chiefs to inherit their fathers' wives as well as his other possessions. These wives, as a rule, each chief distributes amongst his councillors and favourites, but their children are always called his, thus giving him a considerable source of wealth, as the sons work for him, and the daughters bring him large dowries of cattle. Fidelity, either from the husband or wife, is a virtue rarely to be found amongst the heathen, but its absence creates no trouble as long as it is not discovered. If a man ill-uses his wife to any great extent, she can return to her father; the marriage is then annulled, and her father is entitled to retain both her and the cattle paid by the ex-husband for her at the time of the marriage.

In cases where a chief wishes to retain the services of a man, he will bestow one of his wives upon him for the length of time his services are required, but any children born of this marriage

belong to the chief. This state of affairs is kept as much as possible from the knowledge of Europeans, and indeed the missionaries have done much towards the improvement of the people in this respect, as well as in other ways; but, while such vast numbers are averse to Christianity, the improvement must naturally be slow.

Such a thing as an "old maid" is almost unknown amongst the heathen Basuto, nor are widows allowed to remain as such for any length of time. Generally, a widow is married again twelve months after her husband's death, to his nearest blood relation, most frequently his brother.

The superstitions and practices with regard to illness and death are worthy of record. If any one is taken ill it is believed to be because he or she has offended the spirits of his forefathers. To propitiate them, an ox or a sheep must at once be sacrificed, the blood of which must be used to wash the sick person, while the fat from the entrails of the sacrifice must be wrapped round the patient's neck. The meat of the sacrifice is eaten by the "family doctor" and the male relations, without salt, and at one meal. If the patient recovers, it is because the sacrifice has found favour with the spirits; but if he dies, they are still angry, and further means must be taken to propitiate them.

In cases of serious illness, when it is unmistak-

able that death is near, the sick person is taken out of the hut, if it is at all possible to remove him, without causing him instant death, as the spirits obtain easier access to the "Skerm" than to the interior of the hut. A hole is cut in the "Skerm" to enable the spirits to enter, as they cannot do so through the doorway of mortals. The friends and relatives of the dying man (or woman) then bid him farewell and leave him to the care of the watchers, old women, blood relations of the family. These heartless creatures resort to the most cruel and barbarous acts, which it would be too revolting to describe; suffice it to say, that, ere life is quite extinct, they place their victims in the recognisedly correct posture, namely, in an upright position, with knees up to chin, and arms doubled up. They then tie him securely so that he cannot move his limbs.

In cases where death has been unexpected, the sinews have to be severed at the elbows, knees, and hips, in order to place the dead in the correct position for burial. As soon as death has occurred, a skin is thrown over the corpse, which on no account must be removed by any one. The old women then break out into a dismal wailing cry, and the watchers outside know that all is over. They immediately throw ashes on their heads and join in the weeping, placing their hands on their bowed heads, and almost prostrating themselves

before the dead. All friends are then summoned, each one bringing a present of grain for the dead to sustain him on his journey. They then kill an ox as a sacrifice, which is cooked after dark; the mourners weep and gird their loins with strips of hard hide, and seat themselves in groups by the hut. Very little talking is allowed, the only permissible subject being the good deeds and noble qualities of the deceased. After dark a few of the nearest male relatives set off to dig the grave, which is a circular hole about four feet deep. The doctor is called to pray for clouds, in order that the night may become very dark.

Shortly before midnight the corpse is carried, still wrapped in the skin, and placed at the entrance to the cattle kraal, which is left open all night, as he alone must guard the cattle from straying on this, his first night in the spirit world. Just before dawn he is placed in his grave with the grain, a small piece of meat, salt and leting, and a large stone, as nearly the size of the grave as possible, is placed on his head. He is placed facing the east, to be ready to obey "Molinio's" call, and in a crouching position, so as not to be late in answering it. The grave is then filled up with earth and stones, until there is a fair-sized mound. On the top of this is placed the contents of the stomach of the cow or ox, sacrificed at sunset to the spirits who rule over

life and death, after which every one must leave the grave, without one backward glance, if they do not wish to incur the severe displeasure of the spirits.

The entrance to the cattle kraal is then built up, and a new one made. The cattle are called "Melimo a' nko e metse" (the spirits with the wet noses). The graves of old men are always dug round the kraal, others are buried, either on the hill top, or in sight of the kraal, but not very near.

The mourners then return to the hut, where the meat of the sacrifice is divided between them; but before eating, they wash themselves, and the near relations of the deceased fasten a piece of fat from the entrails round their neck, thus signifying that they mourn for a parent, or husband, or child, and to propitiate the spirits, lest another of the family should die. In eating the meat great care must be taken that no bones are allowed to be thrown away, or given to the dogs, because they are a sacrifice to the old god, and dogs may neither partake of such food nor enter the "happy land." When all the meat is eaten the bones are collected and burnt, while the mourners stand round and cry, "Our God, hear us, oh! hear us, we pray, and receive this dead brother (or sister) in peace. There is a light to our grandfather's Father. May the old God pray to the new God for us."

I forgot to mention that the meat of the

sacrifice must not be cut with a knife, nor have salt eaten with it. It must be torn in pieces, as to use a knife would be to make sickness sharp. The poles of the dead man's hut are then pulled out, as no one must live in it again, and it is made a ruin.

After four or five months the pieces of fat are removed from the necks of the mourners, and replaced by a black reim, or strap, which is worn until the year of mourning has expired. The nearest male relative, uncle or brother of the deceased, then arrives, and is shown all the clothing, bedding, &c., with any possessions, such as knives, weapons, saddlery, &c., which belonged to the dead man. A sheep is then killed, and the blood is sprinkled over the clothing. The whole sheep must be eaten by the uncle alone before he can return to his own house. When it is finished he breaks the mourning chains, which he takes with him. A pack ox or horse and all the personal effects of the deceased are brought to the door and taken away by the uncle, who thus removes all sickness from the family. When he reaches home, before he enters his own house, another sheep is killed and quickly eaten by him and his family, so as to drive sickness far from the house.

Should any one be so heartless as not to cry at the funeral of friend or relation, the spirits become enraged, and visit him with some terrible sickness as a punishment for his hardness of heart.

CHAPTER VII.

BIRTH CUSTOMS — EDUCATION — INTELLECT — CHARACTER — NEWS-CARRIERS.

THE "Khapong," which I mentioned in a former chapter, is supposed to be the abode of the Spirit of Maternity, and women who have no children firmly believe this spirit is able to grant their heart's desire if only they can find favour in his sight. In order that he may see how earnestly they desire a child, they will make either a wooden or clay doll, which they strap on their backs and carry about with them, as they would a living child, for at least six months. At the end of that time, they lay it in the "Khapong" as an offering to the spirit, together with any bangles, beads, or ornaments, or even money, which they can collect. Should no child be born, it is a sign that the woman has not found favour with the spirit yet, so the doll is removed from the "Khapong," and strapped on the woman's back until the spirit is satisfied, when oh, joy! the longed-for child is born. I know of one case where for five years the woman carried one of these dolls about with her before her petition was granted.

The customs with regard to the birth of a

woman's first child are decidedly quaint. To begin with, the wife must leave her husband's house about a month, or even longer, before the expected arrival of the child, as it must be born at the home of its maternal grandmother, or else it cannot possibly live to grow up. If it happens to be a boy, the rejoicings are judiciously mixed with regret. As the news-bearers set out at once to carry the tidings to the father (who has remained at his own village), they learn nothing of the woman's condition, that is a matter of slight importance. Upon arrival at their destination they attack the unsuspecting man and beat him vigorously with their sticks. No word is spoken, but the unlucky man at once understands he is the father of a male child instead of the eagerly hoped-for daughter. Naturally he is disappointed, but nevertheless he consoles himself with the reflection that after all a boy is better than no child, for he will certainly be of some use, and the spirits may be kind and give him a daughter next time. If, on the other hand, the infant is a girl, the woman receives many and hearty congratulations; the news-bearers hurry off to carry the joyful tidings to the father. Great caution is observed as they approach the village, lest he should catch sight of them. At length they manage to creep up behind him, when he is sitting outside, probably conversing with one or

two friends. The messengers are armed this time with a pot of water, which they throw over the happy father, who immediately receives the congratulations of all his friends. The water is supposed to act as a wholesome "damper" upon his joy, lest the good news should prove injurious to him or unsettle his mind. It is not considered correct for him to visit his wife and child, but, when the baby is a month old, the wife returns to her husband, bringing the child with her. Basuto women often nurse their baby until it is eighteen months old. When the first baby is weaned, the mother takes it back to her parents, to whom it will in future belong; the actual parents no longer retain any claim upon it, nor, should it be a girl, do they receive the dowry upon her marriage; that also belongs to the maternal grandparents.

Should a doctor be called in at the birth of a child, the mother can neither wean it nor cut its hair until the doctor has given his consent. Usually the infant's head is shaved on the second day.

Should other children be born, there is no need for the mother to leave her husband's house, as no evil will attend their birth, such as threatens the birth of the first-born. In all cases where no doctor has been in attendance, the father has absolute control over the child, whether absent or

present, and no step can be taken without first consulting him.

Sometimes rather strange complications arise. For instance, numbers of Basuto leave the country every year to find work in the mines and on the railways. Many of them are married men with young children. Suppose one man left a wife and baby of a few months old behind him, his wife must on no account wean the child until her husband returns. The result is, that now and then one comes across quite big children, able to run about and talk quite intelligently, still unweaned, and, when asked the reason, the mother will reply: "My husband has not yet returned." Occasionally he never comes back.

When the birth of a child is momentarily expected, as many women and old men (the latter being regarded as "old women") crowd into the hut as it will conveniently hold. As soon as the child is born, an appropriate name is suggested, such as "Thibello" (waited for or long expected), "Siluane" (tear-drop), etc., and by this name the child is in future known, the mother taking the name "Ma-Thibello" (mother of waiting), or "Ma" (mother of), whichever name is given to the child.

Should a woman die while her child is still too young to be fed with a spoon, a sheep or goat is killed, and the windpipe, thoroughly cleansed, is

used as a feeding-tube, down which the milk is slowly poured into the child's mouth If it is not expedient to kill an animal, a female goat in milk is procured, and the child taught to drink from the goat's udder. In these cases the goats become more attached to their "foster children" than to their own offspring, and will return at regular intervals to the hut to suckle the child. It is a strange sight to see a goat run bleating to the hut out of which crawls a fat brown baby, over whom the animal rejoices as if it were her own, lying down contentedly to allow it to drink, until, thoroughly satisfied, the child retires to sleep, and the goat trots off to pasture, returning again to her charge in a few hours.

Amongst Christian families Sesuto names are always given to the children at the time of their birth, although, when old enough, they are taken to the missionary to be baptized, the name then chosen being generally a Biblical one. The Basuto also bestow what they consider suitable Sesuto names upon the Europeans and their children living in the country.

Now that education is procurable in the country, the children are sent off to school as soon as they are old enough to master the alphabet. Many of them are bright, clever little creatures, and keenly interested in their studies, with often quite as much ability as the ordinary

European child of the same age, but, as a rule, they can only be educated up to a certain point. When one reaches that one comes, as it were, to a blank wall. There seems to be no further brain power to develop, and, if forced to continue his studies, the youth will become sullen, stupid, and intensely trying to one's patience. This applies to them in all "walks of life"—in domestic work, in carpentry, masonry, etc. The girls are good, honest, nice-tempered servants, capable of becoming fairly efficient in all household work, and especially good as nurses, being devoted to their little charges, who, as a rule, have a great affection for them in return; but one has to realise at once that one must limit one's expectations, and be content with something considerably less than perfection. Their wonderful honesty, on the other hand, is a strong point in their favour. I have lived ten years in the country, and have only had two dishonest servants during that period.

All church services have a great attraction for them, whether heathen or baptized Christians, and they will go long distances to attend "service," on week days as well as Sundays. They are a musical race, and pick up the airs of the hymns and chants with wonderful celerity, learning to sing in parts as easily as though they had been trained to do so for generations. Many of them have beautiful voices. In church they are very

devout, and would put to shame many a civilised congregation. Of course, there are many cases of hypocritical devoutness, but is that to be wondered at in a nation barely in touch with civilisation? and, if we look nearer home, are we in a position to criticise? I fancy not. It is, I admit, a little irritating to come across a self-opinionated, intensely consequential young Mosuto, who evidently thinks his fellow-creatures the coarsest pottery as compared with his own superfine eggshell china self, but another generation of civilisation will show them more clearly where they stand.

The Basuto method of carrying news is as follows. In certain villages, at considerable distances apart, there are men whose business it is to act as "criers," because they possess the art of throwing their powerful voices through long distances. In each district, certain spots are selected from which to call. These spots are chosen because of their natural advantages. When any important news has to be sent through the country, a "crier," or Mohale or a Marumo, as he is called (literally "the brave man of the assegai"), goes to the top of one of these chosen places, and shouts his news to the village in the distance, where dwells the next "crier." It is desirable to call at night, as the voice carries so much more distinctly. Crier No. 2, on hearing the voice,

listens, perhaps asks a question or two, and then sets off at a trot to the next spot, from whence he calls to Crier No. 3, and so on. In this way the news travels with astonishing rapidity. Long distances are covered in a few hours. News of battle is never sent until after sunset. During the fighting in Natal and in the Stormberg, the Basuto invariably heard of any big engagement before we did, though we were possessed of telegraphic communication. Of course, I am only referring here to South Basutoland. As far as I know, our headquarters was all along in direct communication with the Generals, and probably received information before other parts of the country.

Often in the evenings, when there is, for South Africa, a great stillness over all, the silence will be broken by the call of one human voice to another. It is by no means unmusical, and there is nothing harsh about it. Somehow the sound seems fitted to the scene, part of the weird strangeness of one's surroundings. I wish my pen were gifted enough to describe it properly, so as to bring the picture before you—the dim twilight; the cool after the great heat of the day; the tiny blinking fires here and there on the dark, frowning mountains from numberless hamlets; the voice of nature hushed to a dreamy murmur; then the deep drawn-out call from one village to another, arousing countless echoes from the kloofs below, or

the steady rise and fall of many voices chanting in the minor key some favourite heathen song as the singers sit round their homes in the refreshing coolness of a Basutoland summer night. One is filled with a great wonder. Life and oneself seem so little, the world so vast, and eternity the vastness beyond all words.

People living in such a country are naturally emotional, and very impressionable, with a firm belief in the supernatural. Their music, too, if such it can be called, is in the minor key, though even that does not have a lastingly depressing effect upon them. They are just like big, undisciplined children, full of "moods" and impulses, and easily influenced by kindness.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATIVE DOCTORS—THOKOLOSI—MOLOI—WARFARE —PROVERBS.

EACH chief has his own especial rain-maker, who is also the "Ngaka," or doctor. These men are held in great veneration by the people, who firmly believe they are possessed of supernatural power. Of course the "Ngaka" encourages this belief in every possible way, playing upon the credulity of his victims with the solemnity of a seer of old. He makes a paying business of it, too, exacting a goat or sheep, or even several head of cattle, as payment, according to the magnitude of the service performed by him. He knows the family history of each individual in his particular district, and, in a quiet, unnoticed way, finds out everything likely to be of use to him either in his profession as doctor or as prophet. He is a student of nature to no small degree, and certainly possesses a wide knowledge of the use of herbs. He has a wonderful magnetic influence over others, the result, I suppose, of superior brain development.

When rain is needed, the chief calls the "Ngaka," who, armed with his divining rod, arrives at the khotla to hear what is required of

him. He then proceeds to "doctor" the rod with a black pigment and human blood (I fancy in the remote past a human victim was always sacrificed, but times are changed, and a few drops of blood are all the rain-god now requires). The people assemble in the village and watch him as he ascends the nearest mountain. When on the summit, he raises his rod heavenward, and calls "Pula ha-e-na a bolokue" (Rain come down and save us). This he does several times, and goes through a considerable amount of pantomime; but, as no one is allowed to go near him, only his gestures can be followed after that one loud call. When he is satisfied that rain is coming, he runs back to the village singing. The people join him, and indulge in feasting and merry-making. If, after seven days, no rain comes, there is something wrong with the divining-rod, which has displeased the rain-god, so the rod is again "doctored," and "Ngaka" goes off once more to the mountain, where he remains in supplication until "he brings down rain." In reality, these men consult the heavens before consenting to make rain, and consequently are seldom unsuccessful.

Certain children are selected, in infancy or early childhood, to be made doctors. Their poor little bodies are cut, and various "medicines" rubbed into the wounds, which bestow powers of divination, of healing, and of witchcraft upon the

children. They become restless and unable to sleep in the hut at night, and, as their minds develop, they are trained by the old doctors to succeed them.

There is in Basutoland a little creature of whom all stand in awe. He is not much bigger than a baboon, but is minus the tail, and is perfectly black, with a quantity of black hair on his body. He has hands and feet like an ordinary mortal, but is never heard to speak. He shuns the daylight, and abhors clothing, even in the coldest weather. Evidently he is above such sensations as heat and cold. This wonderful little creature is "Thokolosi," the Poisoner, the Evil One, whose deeds are cruel, revengeful, apparently unlimited. He has power to kill, to afflict in every imaginable way, to send mad, or to visit with unknown sickness; but to do good is beyond his power. There are several of these little people in the country. They generally are employed by the witch doctors to do their dirty work.

To slight a Thokolosi is to bring down disaster upon oneself. If once you offend him, or he is commanded to injure you, he will hunt you down remorselessly until his object is accomplished. During the day he generally remains hidden in the corner of the witch doctor's hut, behind the enormous juala pots, where it is so dark that he is unseen by even the sharpest eyes. If by any unfortunate chance you meet him at night,

you must neither point at him nor speak to him.

Whether there really are creatures in any way answering to the description of these little people or not I cannot say. My own belief is that these doctors keep Bushmen who act the part and impose upon the superstitions of the Basuto, for there certainly is *some* truth at the bottom of it all, as I can prove from personal experience.

Some years ago, before I knew of the existence of Thokolosi, I was obliged to go to our cow-shed rather late one evening to investigate the disturbance amongst the cows. The moon was nearly full at the time, and was shining brightly. The shed was at the bottom of our garden, some little way from the house. I went, accompanied by my native nurse girl and our big black retriever. Nothing occurred until we were returning, when suddenly we heard what I took to be a dog running from the Residency through the dead leaves in the garden towards us. I had barely said "What's that?" when we heard the "ping" of the wire fence, and saw, crossing the path, not a dozen yards in front of us, a little black creature about the size and shape of a boy of six. The night being very clear and bright there was no mistaking the fact that it was a human form of some sort. It ran with a peculiar shuffle, moving its head from side to

side, straight through our garden into the darkness beyond. When my girl saw it she caught hold of me in terror, but uttered no word. The dog, on the contrary, gave vent to a sound half growl, half howl, and tore off to the house, where we followed as quickly as possible, and found him under my little son's bed, from whence he refused to stir. This was to my mind conclusive proof that I had not been "imagining things," as was said to me when I described what had occurred; for the dog is a really plucky one, and I had never seen him afraid before. My girl then told me we had seen "Thokolosi."

There is yet another evil influence called Moloi. He is in reality a "doctored" Mosuto, whose fate it is to kill the enemies of his clan or chief. When he is a child a deep wound is cut in his back near the spine; into this is rubbed a "medicine" composed of the necessary parts of a human body and various herbs. When this "medicine" influences him, he shuns his fellow-creatures, discards his clothing, and remains out in the veldt all night. His first duty is to kill a relation of his own, as, until he has done so, he can have no heart, no soul. He may be, and often is, extremely reluctant to do such a thing; but, sooner or later, the fever in his blood (the power of the medicine) will compel him to do the foul deed, after which his body finds rest, the fever leaves

him, and he becomes a peaceable mortal once more, until the time comes when Moloi takes the place of the man, and he is ready for any deed, however brutal. Of course, many of these old superstitions and customs are dying out, but they are by no means altogether dead. They are, however, kept as much as possible in the background, and the whole country is making really wonderful strides towards civilization.

Before going to fight, the chief summoned all his warriors to his village, merely telling them to come supplied with "lipabi." This conveyed the desired meaning to them, and they secretly prepared their weapons of war, and ordered their women-folk to prepare the "lipabi," which is merely roast mealies ground to a powder and mixed with sugar or salt. This is the only food carried during the campaign by a Mosuto warrior. Towards sunset they arrived at their chief's village and prepared to kill the sacrifice. This must be a bull in good condition, and the manner of his death is particularly brutal. The unfortunate animal is driven into a secluded spot some distance from the village, the whole "army" accompanying it. (In cases where several chiefs combine against a common foe, each calls his own men, offers his own sacrifices of one or more bulls according to the number of warriors, and has his own separate war-dance.) Of course the "Ngaka"

(doctor) is also present. When it is time to kill the bull, the oldest and bravest warriors step forward armed with three assegais each, which they throw in turn at the quivering, maddened animal, until at last one proves more merciful than its predecessors, and puts an end to the poor brute's sufferings; but on no account must death occur *too* quickly. As soon as it was dead, it was skinned, and the meat, partially cooked, was divided amongst the company, nothing but the skin and the bare bones being allowed to remain. "Mogobelo" (the war dance) then began, the warriors presenting a most grotesque appearance, with their faces and bodies smeared with red and white clay, ox tails suspended round their waists, and from elbows, knees, and often shoulders, their ox hide oblong shields in one hand, an assegai in the other, and head-dresses of every shape and form on their heads.

The doctor had already prepared a spot, and round this they danced, growing more and more excited as the night advanced. Every now and then a warrior would break through the circle into the centre, where he would stamp and shout out the number of foes he had killed in battle, and how and where he had killed them, striking his assegai into the ground for every slain foe.

At daybreak they were all "doctored," and at once set out for the battle-field. As far as I

can learn, they had not any recognised order of advance, but merely did so *en masse*, until within a few hundred yards of the advancing foe. Each side then halted, while from their ranks advanced one of the bravest of their warriors, who in stately manner proceeded to cross the intervening space. Upon his arrival he joined the ranks of the enemy. Whichever warrior succeeded in reaching the foe first, enabled his side to commence the attack.

In former days the warriors were armed only with assegais, battle-axes, shields, and clubs; but now every Mosuto of any standing possesses a firearm of some sort, consequently their method of fighting has undergone considerable changes. They are by no means deadly shots, and would have small chance of success against an European foe in the open; but could give a pretty good account of themselves in the wilds and fastnesses of their own land.

Some of the quaint proverbs, doings, and sayings of the Basuto deserve mention. For instance, it is not correct to pass behind any one, even in a large assembly. It is looked upon as a moral stab in the back. Neither is it correct to insult a foe in the presence of others, the proverb being, "If you prick an enemy with a two-pointed assegai, it will hurt you as well."

When a special blessing is given, the saying is,

"May your feet go softly all your days, and may your face be as the Morning Sun!" In times of peace their greeting to a stranger is, "We welcome you. We are sitting down building houses."

Another proverb is, "One hand washes another." Again, when wishing to praise another, "You have taken the wedge from between my teeth." To one in trouble the greeting is, "The Mother of Consolation comfort you.

Another is, "Break not your heart, sorrow will roll away like mists at sunrise." When any one is dying, they say, "It is not a person. It is only the grave of one."

CHAPTER IX.

BOERS AND BASUTO.

IT is perhaps as well, before closing this account of Basutoland, to mention the relation of Boers and Basuto towards each other, though the subject is so distasteful that I may, perhaps, be pardoned for dwelling very briefly upon it.

The Boers, from the earliest times, have been noted for their cruelty to the coloured races, but this has been particularly so with the Basuto. A glance at the Crime Records at each Station or Magistracy, or a short perusal of the Blue Book, will verify this statement.

Frequent cases of theft by Basuto servants from their Dutch masters are brought up for trial all over the country, and upon investigation the greater number prove to have been committed by those who, despairing of ever receiving the wages due to them for months (in some cases even years) of labour, resort to this method of drawing attention to their case.

As a rule the Mosuto helps himself to some of his master's flocks or herds, and flies for protection to Basutoland. He does not look upon this in the light of actual theft, and is quite willing to be brought up by the Magistrate (or Assistant Com-

missioner as he is called) of his own district, where he knows he may freely state his case with the hope of receiving at least a fair hearing, and, if possible, in the future a portion of the wages due to him, though he knows he will first of all have to endure a certain amount of punishment for the theft he has committed and for desertion, varying in severity according to the enormity of the offence. But all cases cannot be tried in Basutoland. In some instances the Dutchman insists upon the Mosuto being brought up for trial before the Landrost of the nearest Free State town. Small hope is there then that the Mosuto's version will even be listened to.

"That Kaffir dog must learn what it is to steal from a Dutchman." And often poor wretch he does learn—from the "cat"—as well as having to pay a fine or go to prison.

It is no uncommon thing for a Dutchman to hire a Mosuto to work for him for two or three months, holding out as an inducement the promise of a sheep, or a couple of goats, or even a cow, as payment for the work done. When the time has expired, the Mosuto claims his wages, but is put off with an excuse: he must work yet another month, and then he will get something more; or six months longer, and then perhaps he will get a horse. And the poor, ignorant creature remains, only to be again disappointed.

If he is idle he is sjamboked, kicked, and generally ill-used, and in some cases even thus treated simply as a matter of course, though there is no cause for complaint.

The Basuto girls are also beaten both by master and mistress if they fail to give satisfaction, and are generally treated with contempt, if not actually ill-used. If I give one or two examples it will suffice. They are by no means exceptions.

In the Leribe district there lives a man who in his boyhood was leader of the team of oxen belonging to the Dutchman for whom he worked.

It is the duty of the leader, who is generally a boy of from ten to sixteen years of age, to guide the oxen by means of a leather strap attached to the horns of the two leading animals. This little fellow, whom we will call Pete, was employed in this way. His master, as the waggon moved slowly along, used to amuse himself by making a target of little Pete, using the long waggon whip as his weapon, and literally nipping out pieces of flesh from the child's naked body. If Pete ran on ahead to get away from the cruel whip, he was shouted at and threatened with dire punishment, until, terrified, he returned to his work.

At length, one day, a particularly sharp cut of the whip caught the child in the eye dragging it completely out of its socket. No compensation has ever been made to Pete.

Some few years ago a Mosuto girl, who was employed at a Dutch farm-house in the Free State, incurred the anger of her employer, who had her stripped naked and fastened across a bedstead, whereupon he beat her until her back was all cut and bleeding, and a large piece of flesh had been nipped completely out of her thigh. When the pain became so great that for a moment she fainted, she was released, kicked and sworn at, and told to return to her work. Needless to say, she did not do so, but ran away to her home in Basutoland, and returned to her employer no more.

Not so long ago a Dutch farmer was riding round his farm and had occasion to find fault with a native. The man answered him very impertinently, whereupon he rode back to his house, loaded his gun and returned to where the now terrified native was working. With many curses he called the man, telling him he intended to kill him. The poor wretch implored to be spared, but in vain. He was shot, and when the case was tried in one of the Free State towns, the farmer was fined £10!! That night he gave a champagne supper to his friends.

Another similar case was that of a farmer whose habits were not too temperate. One evening he was considerably annoyed by the noise his farm hands were making in their huts, some little distance from the house. The men were having

a small feast, and probably had been drinking a considerable quantity of Kaffir beer, their master had also been drinking—*not* Kaffir beer. He walked down to the hut and told them to be quiet. They obeyed only for a few moments. Then the singing and noise began worse than before. Taking his loaded gun with him, the farmer returned to the hut, called out one of the men and shot him dead on the spot. For this he was fined somewhere about £100 by the Free State Government. He was very wealthy. Both these men I have met, also their wives.

Yet one more case. Two servant girls, who for some offence were tied up to the wheels of the waggon by their master and flogged, were taken away, after his fury had exhausted itself upon them—mutilated corpses.

Of course there are, here and there, amongst the Dutch, men and women who are both kind and generous to their native servants, but they are the exception, not the rule.

The ordinary Boer looks upon a native as no better than a dog, without rights, without a soul, a creature to be made use of, or to turn adrift, or ill-use, according to the mood of his master.

I do not wish to give the idea that I consider the native races should be placed on a level with the white races. Far from it. They need to be treated much as one would treat an unruly

child, with *great* firmness, and to be taught to regard the white man as their *master*, as a being infinitely their superior. But a master can be both kind and just, and only punish where punishment is needed. To go from one extreme to the other is *most* undesirable, and can be productive only of harm, and those who try to instil ideas of equality into the semi-savage brain are increasing the trouble which some future generation will almost inevitably have to face.

What is sadly needed is that Englishmen and women (men especially) should set the natives in every part of South Africa an example of uprightness, morality, and perseverance, should gain and retain the respect and devotion of the native tribes, and should judiciously train them to become useful members of our Empire.

The missionaries, undoubtedly, do an enormous amount of good, but many of them are as unwise in their treatment of the Basuto as the Boers, though they err on the side of kindness. They fail to realize that civilisation *must* come gradually to be effective; that to try to run and jump before you can walk is foolish, and may often be harmful, and by treating a raw native as an equal, they are very possibly laying the foundation stone for native disturbances in the future. Directly a native begins to look upon himself as an educated being, equal to the white man,

in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he at once loses all respect for the European, whom he treats in an off-hand, condescending manner, intensely offensive to any one who has realized the wide gulf which separates the two races.

So many people fail to understand that a South African native, even the best, can not be placed in the same category as an Indian. I firmly believe that kindness will repay us infinitely better than cruelty, *but* it must be kindness mixed with *great* firmness, and there should be *no* lowering of the master to the level of the native. If only a better, a higher standard of "morals and manners" could be instilled into the European races of South Africa, there would be no cause for anxiety as to the future development of the native races.

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF TAKANE.

ONCE long ago there lived in Basutoland a chief who had many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and also a beautiful daughter called Takane, the joy of his heart, and her mother's pride. Takane was loved by Masilo, her cousin, who secretly sought to marry her, but she liked him not, neither would she pay heed to his entreaties. At length Masilo wearied her so, that her anger broke forth, and with scorn she said—"Masilo, I like you not. Talk not to me of marriage, for I would rather die than be your wife." "Ho! is that true?" asked Masilo, the evil spirit shining out of his eyes. "Wait a little while, proud daughter of our chief; I will yet repay you for those words." Takane laughed a scornful laugh, and, taking up her pitcher, stepped blithely down to the well. How stupid Masilo was, and why did he keep on troubling her? Did he think, the great baboon, that she would ever marry him? Ho! how stupid men were, after all!

But in Masilo's heart there raged a devil prompting him to deeds of revenge. It whispered in his ear, and, as he listened, he smiled, well pleased, for already he saw the desire of his heart

within his reach. Patience and a little cunning, and she should be his.

The next day Masilo obtained his uncle's consent to his giving a feast at a small village across the river for youths and maidens, as was the custom of his tribe. He then paid a visit to the old witch-doctor, who promised to send a terrible hailstorm upon the village in the middle of the feast. Next he went to all the people of the village, and, because he was a chief's son, and had power in the land, and they were afraid to offend him, he made them promise that none of them would allow Takane to enter their huts; but he said no word of the hailstorm, only he told the people the evil eye would smite them if they disobeyed him.

Early the next day all the villages were astir with excitement; the youths set out in companies by themselves, the maidens following later, singing and dancing as they went. How lovely Takane looked, her face and beautifully rounded limbs shining with fat and red clay; the bangles on her arms and ankles burnished until human endeavour could do no more. Soon all were assembled, and dancing, singing, feasting, and gladness held sway. Suddenly the sky grew dark, the rain-god frowned upon the village, and hail poured in fury down upon the feast. Away ran old and young, seeking shelter in the friendly

huts. Takane alone remained outside. As she ran from hut to hut, the people crowded to the doorway, and, when she implored them to take her in, they replied that indeed they would gladly do so, but how could they find room for even one more? Did she not see how some of them were almost outside the door already? At length she came to a hut in which there was only one old woman, sitting shivering over a small fire. "Mother," exclaimed Takane, "I pray you, let me come in, for I am nearly dead already." The old woman placed herself in the doorway, exclaiming, "Go away; don't you see my house is full?" But the girl gently pushed her aside and entered.

After the storm had passed, the merry-makers returned to their homes, Masilo alone remaining behind, in the hope of discovering Takane's dead body, or hearing something of her fate. As he wandered here and there, he saw her coming towards him, unconscious of his presence, and evidently on her way to cross the river. Quickly he hid behind a huge boulder until she had passed, when he cautiously followed her, overtaking her just as she reached the bank of the river. Now by this time the river was getting almost too full to cross in safety, and the Water Spirit was angrily murmuring, for he wanted a sacrifice of a human being to satisfy him. Masilo went up to Takane, who stood hesitating whether to cross or not, and,

seizing her by the hand, drew her into the river, until the water came up to her neck.

"Will you marry me now, Takane, or shall I let the Water Spirit have you? I know you cannot swim; so if you won't marry me, I shall take you into the deep hole by that tree and push you in. Say, now, will you marry me?"

"No, Masilo, I will never marry you, never. Let the Water Spirit take me first;" and she struggled to free her hand, but he was strong, and he held her fast. Again he drew her farther into the river, until the water reached her lips.

"Now, Takane, is not life with me better than death with the Water Spirit for husband? Say, will you marry me now?"

"I choose rather death in the black pool, with the cold stones for my bed and the water for my covering, than life with you as my husband. Haste, haste, for I am weary and would sleep."

Her continued refusal to marry him so infuriated Masilo, that, seizing her by the hair of her head, he swam out towards the pool, into which he pushed her with a fierce laugh, saying, "There! go drown! It is too late now to change your mind." He then turned, and in a few moments reached the bank, and, without one backward glance, walked off to his hut.

Now a wonderful thing happened to Takane. When Masilo pushed her into the pool, the

hungry water took her swiftly down towards the tree which grew out of the middle of the river. She did not sink, because her "blanket" (literally the skin mantle worn by Basuto before the introduction of blankets) was not yet wet through, and, as she passed under the tree, the blanket caught in a low branch and held her firmly. There she remained for some time, vainly trying to pull herself up into the tree. At length she succeeded in doing so, and for the moment at any rate was safe, but, as she looked at the water all round her, and realized that even when the river was low she could not reach the bank unaided, she felt that it would be better to drown at once than to die a slow death from starvation, which seemed the only fate before her if she remained in the tree. Still, something might happen, some one might pass and see her. Yes, she would wait at least a little while; so, arranging herself as comfortably as she could, she prepared to pass the night in the tree.

The next morning Masilo came down to the river with the cows. Takane hid herself as much as possible, but his sharp eyes soon discovered her.

"Oh, ho! What strange bird is that?" he exclaimed. "How came it in the tree? I must try to catch it." Then, seeing that Takane remained motionless, he sat down on the bank and began to eat his "bogobe" with great enjoyment. "See what nice bread I have. Are you not hungry,

Takane? Shall I send you some? But no, you do not need it. You are so fat, you will live for a long time. Well, I must go away now, but I will come again to-morrow. It is nice to see the dear little Takane so happy."

The next day Masilo came again, and ate his breakfast on the river bank, taunting Takane all the while. This he did on several following days, until Takane became so weak that she neither heard nor saw him, and would have fallen into the water were it not that her blanket held her firmly to the tree. Meanwhile, there was mourning in her father's house and village, for all thought she had been drowned in trying to cross the river after the storm.

One day, Takane's little brother followed Masilo when he took the cattle out to graze. When they came near the river, Masilo told the child not to come any farther, saying if he was a good boy, and did what he was told, he would get a present of some little birds which were in a tree in the river. Masilo then left the child and paid his daily visit to Takane, but the little boy, full of curiosity, followed unseen, and to his great astonishment saw, not a bird's-nest, with the promised young, but his sister Takane, almost unrecognisable from starvation. He listened for a little while to the conversation, then, fearing Masilo's anger if he were discovered, he crept back

to the herd. When Masilo returned, he told the child the birds were not quite big enough to leave their nest. The little boy then went home and told his parents what he had seen. They made him promise to keep his secret; then, calling their medicine man, they hurriedly took counsel together. Late that night, when the village was wrapped in darkness, the parents of Takane and the medicine man set out for the spot where the girl was hidden. The medicine man called upon the spirit of the water to aid them, and soon Takane lay in her mother's arms, too weak even to speak. Slowly and tenderly they bore her back to her home, where for days she lay between life and death. Masilo and the other villagers were told that a sick stranger was in the hut, therefore they must not enter, and, as this is the custom of the people, they thought nothing more of it. Masilo, it is true, had been down to the river and had found Takane gone, but he only thought that at last she had fallen into the water and been drowned. Several times he went down to see if the Water Spirit had given up its victim, but no sign of Takane's real fate came to warn him.

When two moons had come and gone, the old chief saw that the time to punish Masilo had come, so, calling all his people to assemble on a certain day, he made preparations for a great

feast. When the day came, the people all assembled in the open space in front of the khotla (court-house), leaving a wide path from the chief's hut to the centre of the open space. This path was carpeted with new mats, and skin karosses were laid on the ground for the chief and his family to sit upon. Masilo, by right of his near relationship to the chief, took a prominent place in the inner circle, while, unknown to him, several warriors quietly took their stand immediately behind him. Presently the old chief issued from his hut, followed by his chief councillor and medicine man; behind them came Takane's mother, leading by the hand Takane herself, no longer a living skeleton, but plump, smiling, and lovely as ever. A stir like the beginning of a storm shook the people, while Masilo, with a wild cry, turned to escape, but was quickly caught by the armed warriors, who had remained motionless behind him. Briefly the old chief related the story; then, raising his hand and pointing at the terrified Masilo, he cried, "What, my children, shall be the fate of this toad?" With one voice, the people answered, "The cruel death for him! the cruel death for him!"

A smile of approval passed over the chief's face, and, making a sign to the warriors who held Masilo, he turned his back on the trembling wretch, who was dragged off to a distance and

tortured to death, while the village feasted and danced.

When darkness once again enfolded the land, the dead body of Masilo was taken to a secret spot and buried, and life at the village returned to its daily duties; but the spirit of Masilo could not rest, and still strove to possess Takane, as his body had longed for her.

One day the daughters of the village, accompanied by Takane, went forth to gather reeds for the making of mats. They wandered far in their search, and were growing weary, when one of them cried: "See! there are reeds, beautiful reeds, as many as we shall need;" and they looking, saw, even as their companion had said, a small bed of beautiful reeds. Soon all were busily engaged in cutting down armsful of the desired plant; but Takane, being a chief's daughter, was not allowed to work as hard as the other girls, and soon seated herself down to rest in the middle of the reed bed.

When the sun was low in the sky the girls prepared to return home, but Takane could not rise from the ground, nor could her companions lift her. Again and again they tried to move her, but to no purpose; she seemed to have become rooted to the ground. Finally, she persuaded them all to return and obtain help from the village.

"Will you not be afraid, sister, if we leave you alone?" they asked.

"Of what shall I be afraid?" Takane replied. "It is yet light, and the home is near. Haste, for I am hungry, and the night is coming."

The girls then left her and ran home. No sooner had they disappeared, than Takane heard a noise amongst the reeds behind her, and, looking round, she saw Masilo standing there.

"Oh, ho! Takane! you are mine at last! Guessed you not that this was my grave, and that it was I who held you firmly to the ground, so that not even all your companions could raise you? Come now, for we must hasten, lest we be caught by your father's people. By the spirits of my fathers, I have sworn that you shall be my wife."

"But you yourself are a spirit. How, then, can you marry me, and what need have you of a wife? Are you going to kill me even as you were killed?"

"True, I *was* a spirit, but I am now a man, and you are my wife. Come, for I tarry no longer." So saying, he seized her hand and began to run with her away from their old home, while she, filled with superstitious dread, offered only slight resistance. On they ran, ever onward, all through the night and far into the new day. At length, utterly weary, Takane lay down, and refused to

go any farther. All around them were strange mountains and valleys, but no sign of human habitation. Here, then, Masilo resolved to remain, and here he built his hut, with the aid of Takane, who, now that she was powerless to escape, became a happy and devoted wife, obeying Masilo as even a wife should. Soon other wanderers came to dwell near them, and ere many years passed Masilo was chief of a happy, prosperous little village, and Takane the mother of sons and daughters whose beauty made her heart glad.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW KHOSI CHOSE A WIFE.

IN the days of our fathers' fathers there lived a rich chief who had only one wife, whom he loved so much that he would not take even one of the beautiful daughters of the great chief to wife, not even when, after many years, no child was born to them. "I will wait," said the old chief, "the spirits will relent before I die, for we will offer many sacrifices to them." Accordingly the best of the flocks and herds were sacrificed, and the woman found favour in the eyes of the gods, and a daughter, beautiful as the morning, was born. So precious was this child in the eyes of her parents that they hid her from the sight of men, wrapping her in the skin of the crocodile, the sacred beast of the people. Because of this the people called her "Polomahache" (the crocodile scale), and very few believed in her beauty, for they thought she must be deformed or terribly ugly to be hidden away under a covering always; but the maiden grew in beauty and grace, until her parents felt they must strive to find a youth worthy of her, if one was to be had upon the earth.

Now the great chief had a son who was dearer

to him than all his wives or his other children, or even his flocks and herds; a son tall and straight as the spear, fleet of foot as the wild deer, and brave as the mighty lion of the mountains. This youth the people called Khosi, the fleet one.

At the time when Polomahache had become old enough to marry, Khosi had begun to think of taking a wife, and had sent round to the neighbouring villages requesting the people to send the prettiest girls for his inspection, naming a certain day upon which he would receive them. Upon the day named, very early in the morning, Polomahache, enveloped in her crocodile skin and accompanied by two female attendants, set out for Khosi's village. Many other damsels passed them with jest and laughter, bidding Polomahache remain at home, as her looks were enough to frighten even the bravest lover. Now the custom was that each damsel should wash in the pool below the village of the expectant bridegroom-elect; accordingly the pool below Khosi's village was soon thronged with merry, laughing girls, who were quite unconscious of the fact that Khosi was hidden in the branches of a tree close by, from whence he could, unseen, inspect his would-be wives. While the other girls bathed, Polomahache remained quietly in the background, but when they had departed she stepped timidly

down to the water's edge, where she stood hesitatingly, as if afraid to throw off her hideous covering. Khosi, upon seeing her, hid himself more securely in the tree, exclaiming, "Ah! what wild beast have we here? Surely she does not hope that I shall choose her?"

"My child," said one of the attendants, "why do you stand in fear? Know you not that it is the custom of our tribe for the damsels to wash ere they approach their master's house. Remove your covering, then, and be not afraid, for we are alone."

Reluctantly Polomahache did so, and stepped into the clear, cold water, revealing herself in all her beauty to the enraptured gaze of the spectator in the tree.

"Ha," exclaimed Khosi, "what beauty, what eyes, what a face! She, and she alone, shall be my bride." And he continued to gaze upon her until, her bathing completed, she once more enveloped herself in the crocodile skin and departed to the village, when Khosi descended from his hiding-place and returned by another path to his home.

When all the maidens were assembled, Khosi, accompanied by his father and mother, came out from the hut and walked slowly along, carefully studying each maid as he passed. Many bright glances were shot at him; many maiden hearts fluttered in hopeful expectation; but one by one

he passed them all until he came to little Polomahache, who had hidden herself away at the end of the row of maidens.

"Ho! hèla! what is this?" exclaimed Khosi. "Surely this is no maiden, but some wild beast."

"Indeed, Chief Khosi," replied a gentle voice from behind the skin, "I am but a poor maid who fears she cannot hope to find favour in the eyes of the Great One."

"Now truly, mother, this is the wife for me. Send all the other maidens away, for I will have none of them." So saying, Khosi turned and re-entered the hut. His mother trembled with rage, for she thought Polomahache had bewitched her son, so she followed him into the hut; but when she heard what he had to tell her, she promised to try to arrange the marriage on condition that Khosi would manage to let her see Polomahache without the skin. Accordingly they arranged that Khosi was to see his bride alone, and if he could persuade her to throw off the crocodile skin he was to clap three times as if in pleasure, and his mother would come in.

When the sun was low in the heavens Khosi conducted Polomahache to his father's hut, where at length he persuaded her to throw off the skin. As it fell to the ground he clapped three times, exclaiming, "Oh! beautiful as the dawn is my beloved; her eyes are tender as the eyes of a

deer ; her voice is like many waters." As he spoke his mother entered, and being quite satisfied with the maiden's beauty, the marriage was soon arranged, and Khosi and his beautiful bride dwelt long in happiness and prosperity in the land of their fathers.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VILLAGE MAIDEN AND THE CANNIBAL.

THE village was starving, there was no running away from the fact; the men's eyes were big and hungry-looking, and even the plumpest girl was thin. What was to be done? The maidens must go out to find roots. Perhaps the spirits would take pity on their starved looks and guide them to where the roots grew; so early in the morning all the maidens, led by the chief's two daughters, left the village to seek for food; they walked two by two, a maid and a little girl, side by side. Long they journeyed, and weary were their feet, yet they found nothing, and darkness was creeping over the land. So they laid themselves down to rest under the Great Above, with no shelter or covering over them, to wait for the coming dawn. Next day as they journeyed, behold one of the children espied a root, another, and yet another, until all were busy digging up the precious food. Now a strange thing happened, for, while the maidens only found long thin roots, the children gathered only thick large ones. At length enough had been found to last the village for a time, so the girls set off to return home. As they came near the river they saw it

was terribly flooded, and an old, old woman sat crooning upon the bank.

As they approached they began to distinguish the words she was chanting:—

"The Water Spirit loves not the thin roots,
They are the food of swine—
There is no safety for them.
But the large root, how good it is—
It is the food of spirits, even of the
Great Water Spirit.
Safety and strength are in it;
The water flows on, flows on."

"Mother," said the elder of the chief's daughters, approaching the old woman, "tell us of your wisdom how we shall cross this swollen river, for we are in haste to reach our home."

Without lifting her eyes from the water, the dame replied, "To the swollen river a swollen root; in each maid's right hand a root that is large, then cross and fear not."

Accordingly the girls chose their largest root, which they threw upon the water, and then each child of her store of fat roots chose two; one she gave to one of the elder maidens, the other she held in her own right hand, then two by two they stepped into the river and in safety gained the opposite bank. But when it came to the turn of the chief's two daughters, the child refused to give her sister one of her large roots, nor were threats or entreaties of any avail. The night was

fast approaching, their companions were almost out of sight, and the river rolled at their feet, dark, swift, and deep.

At length the child relented, and soon the two girls were speeding after their friends; but it was too dark to see, and they missed their road and wandered far in the darkness. When midnight was fast approaching they saw a light shining near, and upon going up to it, found themselves at the door of a hut, over which a mat hung. "Let us ask for shelter for the night," said the elder girl, and shook the mat.

"Get up! get up! son of mine, and see if people are at the door; for I am hungry and would eat meat." The voice was that of a man, who was seated in front of some red-hot cinders in the middle of the hut.

The little boy ran to the door, and, upon seeing the two girls standing there, implored them to run away at once, as his father was a cannibal and would eat them up; but before they had time to do so, the old man appeared and dragged them into the hut.

Early the next morning the old cannibal left the hut to call two of his friends to share his feast. Before he left he securely fastened the two girls together, and told his son to watch them carefully.

Now, as soon as he was out of sight, there

appeared at the door the old woman who yesterday had been sitting on the river bank. She at once set the girls free, but told them she must cut off all their hair. When this was done, she took a little and buried it under the floor of the hut, another bunch she buried under the refuse heap outside, another near the spring, and yet another half way up the hill. She then returned to the hut and burnt the remaining hair.

"Now, my children," said she, "you must fly to your home. I shall follow you under the ground, but your guide shall be a bee. Follow where it leads, and you will be safe." So saying, she led them to the door and drew down the mat.

"Run!" said the boy; "make haste! There is the bee grandmother told you of. Follow quickly, lest my father find you and kill you."

Seeing a bee hovering near, the girls followed where it led. Presently they met two men, who stopped them, and asked, "Who are you? Are you not the two girls our friend has told us of? Did you not stay last night in a hut with an old man and a boy?"

"We know not of whom you speak," replied the girls. "We have seen no old man, nor little boy."

"Ho, ho! is that true? But yes, we see it is true. He told us his victims had plenty of hair, but you have none. No, no; these are not they;

these are only people." So saying, they allowed the girls to continue their journey.

Now when the old man and his friends found the girls had escaped, they were very angry; but the little boy said he did not think they could be very far away. The old man went out and began calling, but, as he called, there answered him a voice from the hair under the hut, another voice from the hair by the spring, another from the mountain, and so on from each spot where the old woman had buried the hair, until he became mad with rage and disappointment; then, guessing that witchcraft had been used, and that the two girls his friends had spoken to were indeed his intended victims, he set off in pursuit; but when he caught sight of them, they were almost at their father's village, and a large swarm of bees was between him and them, which, when he tried to overtake the girls, stung him so terribly that he howled with agony, and dared not approach any nearer. Thus the girls escaped, and returned to bring the light of day to their parents' eyes.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORONGOE THE SNAKE.

MOKETE was a chief's daughter, but she was also beautiful beyond all the daughters of her father's house, and Morongoe the brave and Tau the lion both desired to possess her, but Tau found not favour in the eyes of her parents, neither desired she to be his wife, whereas Morongoe was rich and the son of a great chief, and upon him was Mokete bestowed in marriage.

But Tau swore by all the evil spirits that their happiness should not long continue, and he called to his aid the old witch doctor, whose power was greater than the tongue of man could tell; and one day Morongoe walked down to the water and was seen no more. Mokete wept and mourned for her brave young husband, to whom she had been wedded but ten short moons, but Tau rejoiced greatly.

When two more moons had waned, a son was born to Mokete, to whom she gave the name of Tsietse (sadness). The child grew and throve, and the years passed by, but brought no news of Morongoe.

One day, when Tsietse was nearly seven years old, he cried unto his mother, saying, "Mother,

how is it that I have never seen my father? My companions see and know their fathers, and love them, but I alone know not the face of my father, I alone have not a father's protecting love."

"My son," replied his mother, "a father you have never known, for the evil spirits carried him from amongst us before ever you were born." She then related to him all that had happened.

From that day Tsietse played no more with the other boys, but wandered about from one pool of water to another, asking the frogs to tell him of his father.

Now the custom of the Basuto, when any one falls into the water and is not found, is to drive cattle into the place where the person is supposed to have fallen, as they will bring him out. Many cattle had been driven into the different pools of water near Morongoe's village, but as they had failed to bring his father, Tsietse knew it was not much use looking near home. Accordingly, one day he went to a large pond a long distance off, and there he asked the frogs to help him in his search. One old frog hopped close to the child, and said, "You will find your father, my son, when you have walked to the edge of the world and taken a leap into the waters beneath; but he is no longer as you are, nor does he know of your existence."

This, at last, was the information Tsietse had longed for, now he could begin his search in real earnest. For many days he walked on, and ever on. At length, one day, just as the sun was setting, he saw before him a large sea of water of many beautiful colours. Stepping into it, he began to ask the same question; but at every word he uttered, the sea rose up, until at length it covered his head, and he began falling, falling through the deep sea. Suddenly he found himself upon dry ground, and upon looking round he saw flocks and herds, flowers and fruit, on every side. At first he was too much astonished to speak, but after a little while he went up to one of the herd boys and asked him if he had ever seen his (Tsietse's) father. The herd boy told him many strangers visited that place, and he had better see the chief, who would be able to answer his question.

When Tsietse had told his story to the chief, the old man knew at once that the great snake which dwelt in their midst must be the child's father; so, bidding the boy remain and rest, he went off to consult with the snake as to how they should tell Tsietse the truth without frightening him; but as they talked, Tsietse ran up to them, and, seeing the snake, at once embraced it, for he knew it was his father.

Then there was great joy in the heart of

Morongoe, for he knew that by his son's aid he should be able to overcome his enemy, and return at length to his wife and home. So he told Tsietse how Tau had persuaded the old witch doctor to turn him into a snake, and banish him to this world below the earth. Soon afterwards Tsietse returned to his home, but he was no longer a child, but a noble youth, with a brave, straight look that made the wicked afraid. Very gently he told his mother all that had happened to him, and how eager his father was to return to his home. Mokete consulted an old doctor who lived in the mountain alone, and who told her she must get Tsietse to bring his father to the village in the brightness of the day-time, but that he must be so surrounded by his followers from the land beyond that none of his own people would be able to see him.

Quickly the news spread through the village that Morongoe had been found by his son and was returning to his people

At length Tsietse was seen approaching with a great crowd of followers, while behind them came all the cattle which had been driven into the pools to seek Morongoe. As they approached Mokete's house the door opened and the old doctor stood upon the threshold.

Making a sign to command silence, he said:— "My children, many years ago your chief received

a grievous wrong at the hand of his enemy, and was turned into a snake, but by the love and faithfulness of his son he is restored to you this day, and the wiles of his enemy are made of no account. Cover, then, your eyes, my children, lest the Evil Eye afflict you."

He then bade the snake, which was in the centre of the crowd, enter the hut, upon which he shut the door, and set fire to the hut. The people, when they saw the flames, cried out in horror, but the old doctor bade them be still, for that no harm would come to their chief, but rather a great good. When everything was completely burnt, the doctor took from the middle of the ruins a large burnt ball; this he threw into the pool near by, and lo! from the water up rose Morongoe, clad in a kaross, the beauty of which was beyond all words, and carrying in his hand a stick of shining black, like none seen on this earth before, in beauty, or colour, or shape. Thus was the spell broken through the devotion of a true son, and peace and happiness restored, not only to Mokete's heart, but to the whole village.

CHAPTER XIV.

MORENA-Y-A-LETSATSI, OR THE SUN CHIEF.

IN the time of the great famine, when our fathers' fathers were young, there lived across the mountains, many days' journey, a great chief, who bore upon his breast the signs of the sun, the moon, and eleven stars. Greatly was he beloved, and marvellous was his power. When all around were starving, his people had plenty, and many journeyed to his village to implore his protection. Amongst others came two young girls, the daughters of one mother. Tall and lovely as a deep still river was the elder, gentle and timid as the wild deer, and her they called Siloane (the tear-drop.)

Of a different mould was her sister Mokete. Plump and round were her limbs, bright as the stars her eyes, like running water was the music of her voice, and she feared not man nor spirit. When the chief asked what they could do to repay him for helping them in their need, Mokete replied, "Lord, I can cook, I can grind corn, I can make 'leting,' I can do all a woman's work."

Gravely the chief turned to Siloane—"And you," he asked, "what can you do?"

"Alas, lord!" Siloane replied, "what can I

say, seeing that my sister has taken all words out of my mouth."

"It is enough," said the chief, "you shall be my wife. As for Mokete, since she is so clever, let her be your servant."

Now the heart of Mokete burned with black hate against her sister, and she vowed to humble her to the dust; but no one must see into her heart, so with a smiling face she embraced Siloane.

The next day the marriage feast took place, amidst great rejoicing, and continued for many days, as befitted the great Sun Chief. Many braves came from far to dance at the feast, and to delight the people with tales of the great deeds they had done in battle. Beautiful maidens were there, but none so beautiful as Siloane. How happy she was, how beloved! In the gladness of her heart she sang a song of praise to her lord—"Great is the sun in the heavens, and great are the moon and stars, but greater and more beautiful in the eyes of his handmaiden is my lord. Upon his breast are the signs of his greatness, and by their power I swear to love him with a love so strong, so true, that his son shall be in his image, and shall bear upon his breast the same tokens of the favour of the heavens."

Many moons came and went, and all was peace and joy in the hearts of the Sun Chief and his

bride; but Mokete smiled darkly in her heart, for the time of her revenge approached. At length came the day, when Siloane should fulfil her vow, when the son should be born. The chief ordered that the child should be brought to him at once, that he might rejoice in the fulfilment of Siloane's vow. In the dark hut the young mother lay with great content, for had not Mokete assured her the child was his father's image, and upon his breast were the signs of the sun, the moon, and eleven stars?

Why then this angry frown on the chief's face, this look of triumph in the eyes of Mokete? What is this which she is holding covered with a skin? She turns back the covering, and, with a wicked laugh of triumph, shows the chief, not the beautiful son he had looked for, but an ugly, deformed child with the face of a baboon "Here, my lord," she said, "is the long-desired son. See how well Siloane loves you, see how well she has kept her vow! Shall I tell her of your heart's content?"

"Woman," roared the disappointed chief, "speak not thus to me. Take from my sight both mother and child, and tell my headman it is my will that they be destroyed ere the sun hide his head in yonder mountains."

Sore at heart, angry and unhappy, the chief strode away into the lands, while Mokete hastened

to the headman to bid him carry out his master's orders; but ere they could be obeyed, a messenger came from the chief to say the child alone was to be destroyed, but Siloane should become a servant, and on the morrow should witness his marriage to Mokete.

Bitter tears rolled down Siloane's cheeks. What evil thing had befallen her, that the babe she had borne, and whom she had felt in her arms, strong and straight, should have been so changed ere the eyes of his father had rested upon him? Not once did she doubt Mokete. Was she not her own sister? What reason would she have for casting the "Evil Eye" upon the child? It was hard to lose her child, hard indeed to lose the love of her lord; but he had not banished her altogether from his sight, and perhaps some day the spirits might be willing that she should once again find favour in his sight, and should bear him a child in his own image.

Meanwhile Mokete had taken the real baby to the pigs, hoping they would devour him, for each time she tried to kill him some unseen power held her hand; but the pigs took the babe and nourished him, and many weeks went by—weeks of triumph for Mokete, but of bitter sorrow for Siloane.

At length Mokete bethought her of the child, and wondered if the pigs had left any trace of

him. When she reached the kraal, she started back in terror, for there, fat, healthy, and happy, lay the babe, while the young pigs played around him. What should she do? Had Siloane seen him? No, she hardly thought so, for the child was in every way the image of the chief. Siloane would at once have known who he was.

Hurriedly returning to her husband, Mokete begged him to get rid of all the pigs, and have their kraal burnt, as they were all ill of a terrible disease. So the chief gave orders to do as Mokete desired; but the spirits took the child to the elephant which lived in the great bush, and told it to guard him.

After this Mokete was at peace for many months, but no child came to gladden the heart of her lord, and to take away her reproach. In her anger and bitterness she longed to kill Siloane, but she was afraid.

One day she wandered far into the bush, and there she beheld the child, grown more beautiful than ever, playing with the elephant. Mad with rage, she returned home, and gave her lord no rest until he consented to burn the bush, which she told him was full of terrible wild beasts, which would one day devour the whole village if they were not destroyed. But the spirits took the child and gave him to the fishes in the great river, bidding them guard him safely.

Many moons passed, many crops were reaped and Mokete had almost forgotten about the child, when one day, as she walked by the river bank, she saw him, a beautiful youth, playing with the fishes. This was terrible. Would nothing kill him? In her rage she tore great rocks from their beds and rolled them into the water; but the spirits carried the youth to a mountain, where they gave him a wand. "This wand," said they, "will keep you safe. If danger threatens you from above, strike once with the wand upon the ground, and a path will be opened to you to the country beneath. If you wish to return to this upper world, strike twice with the wand, and the path will re-open."

So again they left him, and the youth, fearing the vengeance of his stepmother, struck once upon the ground with his wand. The earth opened, showing a long narrow passage. Down this the youth went, and, upon reaching the other end, found himself at the entrance to a large and very beautiful village. As he walked along, the people stood to gaze at him, and all, when they saw the signs upon his breast, fell down and worshipped him, saying, "Greetings, lord!" At length, he was informed that for many years these people had had no chief, but the spirits had told them that at the proper time a chief would appear who should bear strange signs upon his breast; him the people

were to receive and to obey, for he would be the chosen one, and his name should be Tsepitso, or the promise.

From that day the youth bore the name of Tsepitso, and ruled over that land; but he never forgot his mother, and often wandered to the world above, to find how she fared and to watch over her. On these journeys he always clothed himself in old skins, and covered up his breast that none might behold the signs. One day, as he wandered, he found himself in a strange village, and as he passed the well, a maiden greeted him, saying, "Stranger, you look weary. Will you not rest and drink of this fountain?"

Tsepitso gazed into her eyes, and knew what love meant. Here, he felt, was the wife the spirits intended him to wed. He must not let her depart, so he sat down by the well and drank of the cool, delicious water, while he questioned the maid. She told him her name was Ma Thabo (mother of joy), and that her father was chief of that part of the country. Tsepitso told her he was a poor youth looking for work, whereupon she took him to her father, who consented to employ him.

One stipulation Tsepitso made, which was that for one hour every day before sunset he should be free from his duties. This was agreed to, and for several moons he worked for the old chief, and

grew more and more in favour, both with him and with his daughter. The hour before sunset each day he spent amongst his own people, attending to their wants and giving judgment. At length he told Ma Thabo of his love, and read her answering love in her beautiful eyes. Together they sought the old chief, to whom Tsepitso told his story, and revealed his true self. The marriage was soon after celebrated, with much rejoicing, and Tsepitso bore his bride in triumph to his beautiful home in the world beneath, where she was received with every joy.

But amidst all his happiness Tsepitso did not forget his mother, and after the feasting and rejoicing were ended, he took Ma Thabo with him, for the time had at length come when he might free his mother for ever from the power of Mokete.

When they approached his father's house, Mokete saw them, and, recognising Tsepitso, knew that her time had come. With a scream she fled to the hut, but Tsepitso followed her, and sternly demanded his mother. Mokete only moaned as she knelt at her lord's feet. The old chief arose, and said, "Young man, I know not who you are, nor who your mother is; but this woman is my wife, and I pray you speak to her not thus rudely."

Tsepitso replied, "Lord, I am thy son."

"Nay now, thou art a liar," said the old man sadly, "I have no son."

"Indeed, my father, I am thy son, and Siloane is my mother. Dost need proof of the truth of my words? Then look," and turning to the light, Tsepitso revealed to his father the signs upon his breast, and the old chief, with a great cry, threw himself upon his son's neck and wept. Siloane was soon called, and knew that indeed she had fulfilled her vow, that here before her stood in very truth the son she had borne, and a great content filled her heart. Tsepitso and Ma Thabo soon persuaded her to return with them, knowing full well that her life would no longer be safe were she to remain near Mokete; so, when the old chief was absent, in the dusk of the evening they departed to their own home.

When the Sun Chief discovered their flight, he determined to follow, and restore his beloved Siloane to her rightful place; but Mokete followed him, though many times he ordered her to return to the village, for that never again would she be wife of his, and that if she continued to follow him, he would kill her. At length he thought, "If I cut off her feet she will not be able to walk," so, turning round suddenly, he seized Mokete, and cut off her feet. "Now, wilt thou leave me in peace, woman? Take care nothing worse

befall thee." So saying, he left her, and continued his journey.

But Mokete continued to follow him, till the sun was high in the heavens. Each time he saw her close behind him, he stopped and cut off more of her legs, till only her body was left; even then she was not conquered, but continued to roll after him. Thoroughly enraged, the Sun Chief seized her, and called down fire from the heavens to consume her, and a wind from the edge of the world to scatter her ashes.

When this was done, he went on his way rejoicing, for surely now she would trouble him no more. Then as he journeyed, a voice rose in the evening air, "I follow, I follow, to the edge of the world, yea, even beyond, shall I follow thee."

Placing his hands over his ears to shut out the voice, the Sun Chief ran with the fleetness of a young brave, until, at the hour when the spirits visit the abodes of men, he overtook Tsepitso and the two women, and with them entered the kingdom of his son.

How he won pardon from Siloane, and gained his son's love, and how it was arranged that he and Siloane should again be married, are old tales now in the country of Tsepitso. When the marriage feast was begun, a cloud of ashes dashed against the Sun Chief, and an angry voice was

heard from the midst of the cloud, saying, "Nay, thou shalt not wed Siloane, for I have found thee, and I shall claim thee for ever.' Hastily the witch doctor was called to free the Sun Chief from the power of Mokete. As the old man approached the cloud, chanting a hymn to the gods, every one gazed in silence. Raising his wand, the wizard made some mystic signs, the cloud vanished, and only a handful of ashes lay upon the ground.

Thus was the Evil Eye of Mokete stilled for evermore, and peace reigned in the hearts of the Sun Chief and his wife Siloane.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW RA-MOLO BECAME A SNAKE.

LONG, long ago, before the time of the great chief Mosheshue, there lived, behind the mountains, a wicked chief called Ra-Molo (the father of fire), who ruled his people with the hand of hardness His village lay at the foot of a high hill, and down below flowed the Sinkou, deep and dark and cold. Every year, when the harvest feasts began, would Ra-Molo cause to die the black death all those upon whom his displeasure had fallen during the past year; and when the moon was big in the heavens, he would come out from his dwelling to gaze upon his victims, and to listen to their screams of agony. Many, many times have the cries of the poor unfortunates echoed from rock to rock, while the people hid their heads in their blankets and trembled with fear and horror.

When the last feeble moans died away, the chief would return to his dwelling, and a great silence would descend upon the village. Then softly, by ones and by twos, the frightened people would creep away to some quiet spot out of sight of the village, and there offer up their prayers to the spirits of their fathers to rescue them from

Ra-Molo; but for many many moons no help came.

Despair seized upon their hearts and hung in darkness over their homes. What hope was there for them when even the spirits were silent?

Now Ra-Molo had a brother who bore the name of Tau (the lion). This brother Ra-Molo hated with a great and bitter hatred, and gladly would he have put him to death, but he feared the vengeance of the spirits, for Tau was as brave and good as Ra-Molo was wicked and cruel. Then also he knew that all the people loved Tau, and would flee from the one who murdered him, as from the Evil Eye itself.

At length the evil counsels of the 'Ngaka (witch doctor) and the desire of Ra-Molo's heart overcame all fears, and one night, when the silence of sleep had come down upon the village, Ra-Molo called his 'Ngaka to bring his followers, and to enter the dwelling of Tau and put him to death.

The 'Ngaka needed no urging to begin his vile work. His heart glowed with delight as he thought of what a big strong man Tau was, and how long it would take him to die. Soon the whole village was aroused by the shrieks which the torturers extracted from the helpless victim. "Help, oh, help me, my brothers!" cried Tau, "lest I die, and my blood stain the hands of my father's son." They strove to rescue him, but the

hut was well guarded, and their chief stood in the doorway, and forbade them to enter, using many threats to frighten them.

When the grey shadow in mercy came down to end his sufferings, Tau raised his eyes to the stars, and cried, "Oh, spirits of my fathers, receive me, and bring down upon Ra-Molo the heavy hand of vengeance, that his power may be destroyed, and no more innocent blood be spilled upon the earth to cry to the spirits. Oh, let my cry be heard, because of my great suffering!" So saying, he passed to the land of shadows, and a great darkness descended upon the village. All the people crept together and waited in tears for the dawn. At length the sun came forth, the darkness was lifted up; but what awful horror now held the people? What was that towards which all eyes were turned? Behold! at the door of the chief's dwelling lay a gigantic snake, so great that his like had never before been seen. Slowly he uncoiled himself and raised his head, when a wild cry went up from all the people. The body was the body of a snake, but the head was the head of a sheep, with a snake's tongue, which darted in and out from its wide open mouth, while from the eyes the lightning flew. With a long loud hiss-s-s the thing began to crawl towards the river bank, then, raising its head to cast one long backward glance upon the village, it plunged into the

waters of the Sinkou, there to remain a prisoner for all time. The spirits had, indeed, heard the dying cry of Tau, and had turned Ra-Molo into the awful thing the people had just beheld.

Once in each year, as the day comes round, does Ra-Molo rise to the surface of the giant pool, where he lies hid, and woe, woe to the one who sees the silver flash of his great body as he rises, for surely will that poor one be drawn by the power of those evil eyes down, down to the water's edge. Then will the serpent seize him and carry him away from the sight of men to the bottom of the pool, there to sleep cold and still till all men shall be gathered to the land of the spirits of their fathers on the day when the Great Spirit shall call from the stars.

CHAPTER XVI.

LELIMO AND THE MAGIC CAP.

ONCE long ago, when giants dwelt upon the earth, there lived in a little village, far up in the mountains, a woman who had the power of making magic caps. When her daughter Siloane grew old enough to please the eyes of men, her mother made her a magic cap. "Keep this cap safely, my child, for it will protect you from the power of Lelimo (the giant). If you lose it, he will surely seize you and carry you away to his dwelling in the mountains, where he and his children will eat you."

Siloane promised to be very careful, and for a long time always carried the magic cap with her whenever she went beyond the village.

Now it was the custom each year for the maidens of the village to go to a certain spot, where the "tuani" or long rushes grew, there to gather great bundles with which to make new mats for the floors of the houses. When the time came, Siloane and many more maidens set out for the place. The distance was great, and as they must reach their destination at the rising of the sun, they set off from the village at midnight.

Just as the sun rose from sleep, the maidens arrived at the graves on which the rushes grew. Soon all were busy cutting rushes and making mats. Siloane laid down her cap on one of the graves by which she was working. All day the maidens worked, and at sunset they started on their homeward journey. Soon the moon arose and lighted the land, and the light-hearted maidens went gaily singing on their way.

When they had gone some way, Siloane suddenly remembered she had left the magic cap on the grave where she had been sitting. Afraid to face her mother without it, she asked her companions to wait for her while she hurried back to fetch it.

Long the maidens waited, amusing themselves by telling stories and singing songs in the moonlight, but Siloane returned not. At length two girls set out to look for her, but when they reached the spot, no trace of her was to be found. Great was their dismay. How could they tell the news to her parents? Still there was nothing else to be done, and, with heavy hearts, they all returned to the village.

When Ma-Batu, the mother of Siloane, heard their story, she immediately set to work to make another magic cap, which she gave to her younger daughter Sieng, telling her to have it always by her, in case Siloane should need her help.

Meanwhile, Siloane had been taken captive by the giant as she was making her way back to recover her magic cap. When she felt Lelimo's heavy hand on her shoulder, she struggled frantically to get away, but her strength was as water against such a man, and he soon had her securely tied up in his big bag, made out of the skin of an ox.

Now when Lelimo saw Siloane, he was returning from a feast, and was very drunk, so that he mistook his way, and wandered long and far, until, in the morning, he came to a large hut, where he threw down the sack containing Siloane, and demanded a drink of the woman who stood in the door. She gave him some very strong "juala" (beer), which made him more drunk than before. While he was drinking, Siloane called softly from the sack, for she had recognised her mother's voice talking to the giant, and knew that he had brought her in some wonderful way to her father's house. Again she called, and this time her sister heard her, and hastened to undo the sack. She then hid Siloane, and, by the aid of the magic cap, she filled the sack with bees and wasps and closed it firmly. When the giant came out from the hut, he picked up the sack and started for his own home. On his arrival there he again threw down the sack, and ordered his wife to kill and cook the captive

girl he imagined he had brought home. His wife began to feel the sack in order to find out how big the girl was, but the bees became angry and stung her through the sack, which frightened her, and she refused to open it. Thereupon Lelimo called his son, but he also refused. In a great rage, the giant turned them both out of the house, and closed all the openings. He then made a great fire, and prepared to roast the girl.

When he opened the sack, the bees and wasps, who were by this time thoroughly furious, swarmed upon him, and stung him till he howled with agony, and, mad with pain, he broke down the door of the hut and rushed down to the river, into which he flung himself head first. In this position he was afterwards found by his wife, his feet resting on a rock above the water, his head buried in the mud of the river.

Such was the end of this wicked giant, who had been the terror of that part of the country for many, many years.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHIEF AND THE TIGERS.

THERE lived long ago a chief whose wife was beautiful as the morning sun. Dear was she to the heart of her lord, and great was his sorrow when she grew sick. Many doctors and wise women tried to cure her, but in vain. Worse and worse she grew, till the people said she would surely die, and the heart of the chief became as water within him.

One day, as the shadows grew long on the ground, an old, old man came slowly to the village, and asked to see the chief. "Morena (Master)," he said, "I have heard of your trouble, and have come to help you. Your wife is ill of a great sickness, and she will die unless you can get a tiger's heart with which to make medicine for her to drink. See, I have here a wonderful stone which will help you, and some medicine for you to drink. Now wrap yourself in a tiger-skin. The medicine will make you wise to understand and to speak their tongue; so shall they look upon you as a brother. When you have drunk the medicine, take the stone in your hand, and set out on your journey. When you come to the home of the tigers, you must live among them as one of themselves, until you can

find yourself alone with one. Him must you quickly kill, and tear from his warm body his heart unbroken, and then, throwing away your tiger skin, you must flee to your home. The tigers will chase you, but when they come too near, you must throw down the stone in front of you and jump upon it, when it will become a great rock, from whose sides fire will dart forth, and burn any who try to climb it. Thus will you be saved from the power of the tigers, and your wife be restored to health."

Gratefully the chief did as the old man desired, and set off to seek the home of the tigers. Many days he wandered across the plains and over the mountains, into the unknown valleys beyond, and there he found those he sought. They greeted him joyfully, welcoming him as a brother; only one, a young tiger of great beauty, held back, and muttered, "This is no tiger but a man. He will bring misfortune upon us. Slay him, my brothers, ere it be too late;" but they heeded him not. Not many days had passed, when all the tigers scattered themselves over the valley, and the chief found himself alone with the angry young tiger. Watching him patiently, he soon found the opportunity he sought, and, hastily killing him, he tore the still warm heart from the lifeless body, and throwing off his disguise, set off towards his home.

On, on he went, and still no sign of the tigers, but, as the sun sank to rest, they appeared in the distance, and he knew they would soon overtake him. When they were so close behind him that he heard the angry snap of their teeth, he threw down the stone the old man had given him, and sprang on to it. Instantly it became a great rock, even as the old man had said. Up came the tigers, each striving to be the first to tear the heart out of the chief, even as he had torn out their brother's heart; but the first one that reached the rock, sprang back with a howl of agony, and rolled over on his side—dead. The others all drew up in alarm, and dared not approach the stone, but spent many hours in wandering round and round the rock, and grinding their teeth at the chief, who calmly watched them from his seat on the top of the rock.

Just before dawn the tigers, now thoroughly tired, lay down, and soon were fast asleep. Carefully, silently, the chief crawled down from the rock, which immediately became again a small stone. Taking the stone in his hand, and holding close the precious heart, which was to restore his wife to health, he fled like a deer towards his village, which he now saw in the plain below. Should he reach it before the tigers caught him? The perspiration streamed from his body, his ears rang with strange noises, and his breath came in

great gasps, but still he hurried on. Presently he heard the tigers coming. There was no time even to look behind. He *must* reach the village before they overtook him. On, on, stumbling blindly over every obstacle, he staggered. How far away it still looked! Would his people *never* see him? Yes, at last he is seen. He can hear the shout of his men as they rush to help him, only a few more steps now, and he is safe. Bravely he totters on, then stumbles and falls helpless, exhausted, as his men arrive, and carry him in triumph into the village, while the tigers, baffled and furious, retreat to their home beyond the mountains.

With song and dance the people keep festival, for their chief has returned in safety, and his beautiful wife, restored to perfect health, sits smiling by his side, to receive the loving congratulations of old and young; but the old man came not to join the throng, nor was he ever seen in their land again. Quietly as he came, he had gone, leaving no sign behind him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MAID AND HER SNAKE-LOVER.

WHEN our fathers' fathers were children, there lived in the valley of the rivers two chiefs, who governed their people wisely and with great kindness. The name of the one was Mopeli, and of the other Khosi.

Now Mopeli had a son whom he loved as his own heart, a youth, tall and brave, and fearless as the young lion. To him was given the name of Tsiu. When Tsiu was able to stand alone, and to play on the mat in front of his father's dwelling, a daughter was born unto the chief Khosi, to whom was given the name of Tebogo. The years passed, and Tsiu and Tebogo grew and thrived. Often the youth drove his father's cattle down towards the lands where Tebogo and her father's maidens worked, and many happy days were spent, while the love each bore the other grew and strengthened, even as they themselves grew older.

When the time came for Tsiu to take a wife, he went to his father and asked that Tebogo might be given him, for none other could he wed. Gladly the parents consented, and preparations were made for the wedding.

Now Tebogo had another lover, upon whom she looked with scorn, but who had vowed that never, never should she be the bride of Tsiu; so he consulted a witch doctor, who promised to aid him. Imagine then his joy when, ere the wedding feast had begun, he heard that Tsiu had disappeared. "Now," thought he, "Tebogo shall be mine;" but the maiden turned from him in anger, nor would her parents listen to his suit.

Meanwhile desolation hung over the home of the chief Mopeli. "My son, my son," cried the unhappy father; but no voice replied, no son came back to rejoice his father's heart.

When the moon had once more grown great in the heavens, an old man came to the village of Mopeli, and called the chief to him. Long they talked, and greatly the people wondered. At length they arose, and, saluting each other, parted at the door of the chief's dwelling. Mopeli then departed for the village of Chief Khosi, where he remained all night. The next day he returned to his own village, and bade his people prepare a great feast.

In the village of the Chief Khosi, also, much wonder filled the people's minds, for they, likewise, were commanded to make ready a marriage feast, for the chief's daughter, the lovely Tebogo, was about to be married, but none knew to whom.

Calling his daughter to him, Khosi said, "My

child, your lover Tsiu has been taken from you, so it is my wish that you should marry one who has found favour in my eyes."

"Tell me, my father," replied Tebogo, "who is the man you have chosen for me? Let me at least know his name."

"Nay, my child, that I cannot do," answered Khosi, and with this the maiden was obliged to be content. Behold then her horror when she was brought forth to meet her bridegroom, to find not a man, but a snake. All the people cried "shame" upon the parents who could be so cruel as to wed their daughter to a reptile.

With cries and tears Tebogo implored her parents to spare her; in vain were her entreaties. She was told to take her reptile husband home to the new hut which had been built for them, near the large pool where the cattle drank. Tremblingly she obeyed, followed by her maidens, the snake crawling by her side. When she entered the hut, she tried to shut out the snake, but it darted half its body through the door, and so terrified her that she ran to the other end of the hut.

The snake followed, and began lashing her with its tail, till she ran out of the hut down to the clump of willows which grew by the side of the pool. Here she found an old doctor sitting, and to him she told her trouble. "My daughter," he said, "return to your hut. Do not let the

snake see you, but close the door very softly from the outside, and set fire to the hut. When it is all burnt down, you will find the ashes of the snake lying in a little heap in the centre of the hut. Bring them here, and cast them into the water."

Tebogo did as the old doctor directed her, and while the hut was burning, many people ran from both the villages to see what had happened; but Tebogo called to them to keep away, as she was burning the snake. When all was destroyed, she went up, took the ashes of the snake, which she found in the middle of the ruins, and, putting them into a pitcher, ran with them down to the pool and threw them in. No sooner had she done so, than from the water arose, not a snake, but her lover Tsiu. With a joyful cry, she flung herself into his arms, and a great shout went up from all the people gathered there.

As the lightning darts across the heaven, so the news of Tsiu's return spread from hut to hut, and great was the people's wonderment. The story of how he had been turned into a snake, and banished to the pool, until he could find a maiden whose parents would bestow her upon him in marriage, and of how the good old doctor Intō had revealed the secret to Mopeli, was soon told. For many days there was feasting and merry-making in the homes of Mopeli the chief

and of Khosi, while in the hearts of Tsiu and his bride Tebogo there dwelt a great content; but the wicked lover fled to the mountains, where he cherished a bitter hatred in his heart against Tebogo and her husband, and longed for the time when he could be revenged.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FAMINE.

IN the years when the locusts visited the lands of the chief Makaota, and devoured all the food, the people grew thin and ill from starvation, and many of them died. When their food was all gone, they wandered in the lands and up the mountains, searching for roots upon which to feed. Now as they searched, Mamokete, the wife of the Chief Makoata, chanced to wander near some bushes, when suddenly she heard the most exquisite singing. She stopped to listen, but could see nothing. So she walked up to the bushes and looked in, and there she saw the most beautiful bird she had ever seen. "Oh! ho! little bird," she cried, "help me, for I and my husband and children are starving. Our cattle are all dead, and we know not where to find food."

"Take me," sang the bird, "and I will be your food. Keep me safely, guard me well, and you shall never starve as long as I remain with you."

Thankfully the poor woman took the bird and hurried home with it. She placed it in an earthen pitcher and went to call her husband. When they returned, they opened the pitcher to look at the bird, when lo! milk poured from the mouth

of the pitcher, and the hungry people drank. How their hearts rejoiced over the gift which had been given them!

One day Makaota and his wife were going out to the lands to work, but before leaving they called their children, and bade them be good, and guard the pitcher well. The children promised to obey, but soon began to quarrel. Each wished to drink out of the pitcher first, and in their greediness they upset and broke the pitcher, and the bird flew out of the open door. Terrified at what they had done, the children ran after it; but when they got outside, there was no sign of the beautiful bird. It had completely vanished.

What grief now filled their hearts and the hearts of Makaota and Mamokete his wife! Hunger seized once more upon them, and despair filled their hearts. Day by day they sought the wonderful bird, but found her not. At length, when the two children lay sick for want of food, and the parents' hearts were heavy with grief, there came again the wonderful singing, borne upon the evening wind. Nearer and nearer it came, and then, lo! at the open door stood the lovely bird.

"I have come back," she said, "because the punishment has been enough. Take me, and your house shall prosper."

Gladly they took the beautiful bird in their hands, and vowed never again to let anger and greed drive her away from them; and so their house did thrive, even as the bird had said, and peace and plenty dwelt not only in the house of Makaota, but in the whole village for ever after.

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